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THE INDEPENDENT

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IN THE TUESDAY REVIEW + MEDIA

Ten years on, Lockerbie still awaits its moment of justice and truth

By MARY BRAID

IT WAS a poignant moment. As the people of Lockerbie gathered at the town's Dryfesdale cemetery yesterday, with the American relatives of those who perished on Pan Am flight 103, a child clasped the hand of an adult and gazed up at the Border skies in which the Boeing 747 was blown apart exactly 10 years ago.

Yesterday was an international day of remembrance for the 259 passengers who died in the terrorist attack, and the 11 Lockerbie victims killed when the plane crashed to earth. While some 20 American families travelled to Scotland, British relatives of the bomb victims came together at Westminster Cathedral.

The Westminster gathering was designed to take attention away from Lockerbie, where many would now like the town to move on from the tragedy.

Even Bill Clinton took a few moments away from the upheavals of presidential impeachment and the Iraq crisis to remember the crash. Under clammy skies he led a short service at Arlington National Cemetery, Virginia, and dedicated a cairn of 270 stones to the dead - one for every victim.

Another service was held simultaneously in Syracuse, in Upstate New York, on the campus of the city university that lost 35 students when the plane was bombed out of the sky. They had been returning home for the Christmas holidays.

Yesterday was not just a day of pain, but also of frustration. Ten years after the tragedy Western governments are yet to deliver justice to the families of those who died.

Though there have been false dawns, these are more hopeful times. The US and British governments have agreed to proposals for Scottish justice to be exercised on foreign soil and Libya has backed the scheme for two of its nationals - suspects in the outrage - to be tried by an international court. Yesterday the politicians were still promising the families they would bring those responsible for the tragedy to justice. Tony Blair promising to enlist the help of South African president Nelson Mandela to help the Libyan leader Colonel Muammar Gaddafi.



Friends and relatives of the 270 victims of the air crash attending a memorial service at Dryfesdale Cemetery in Lockerbie yesterday on the 10th anniversary of the disaster. Jeff Mitchell

Colonel Gaddafi was meanwhile telling Dutch television he wanted the men accused of planting the Lockerbie bomb tried by an international court. The diplomatic initiatives have warmed the heart of those who have fought to keep the atrocity in the public eye. But the past decade has also built up distrust of politicians, with families now convinced that their own governments failed to pass

warnings that a terrorist attack was imminent. Politicians, it seems, continue to speak with forked tongues. Yesterday's statement by Colonel Gaddafi actually muddled the waters. For he called for judges from "America, Libya, England and other countries" to be involved when the plan acceptable to the US and Britain specifies three Scottish judges.

The frustration with politicians was alluded to yesterday at Dryfesdale during the low key ceremony at which the sole official event was the laying of a wreath by the Duke of Edinburgh at the town's cemetery. Fr Patrick Keegan, the priest who provided spiritual help to the victims' families, spoke almost directly to the dead. "You will see us laying wreaths at your stone," he said.

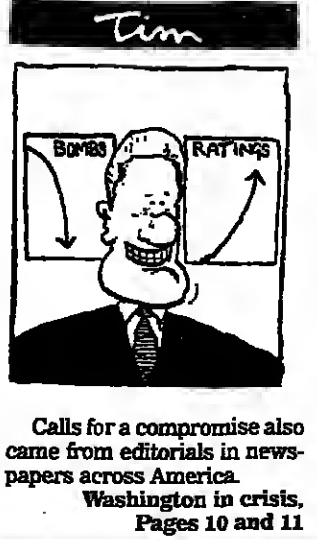
"We want you to be sure that these wreaths are not hollow empty gestures but a statement and declaration full of promise. Ten years ago, for you and for us, a bomb was ticking. Know this, there is another bomb ticking, the irresistible bomb of justice and truth. Know this, that our wreath-laying today is not a symbolic gesture. It is a declaration that we will not rest until we have justice and truth, until all responsible for your deaths are held accountable."

Yesterday, the families made yet another appeal to their politicians to get it right this time. They asked Mr Blair and President Clinton not to jeopardise the prospect of a trial of the two Libyan suspects with threats of renewed military action in the Middle East in the wake of the Iraqi bombings.

Clinton wins record approval in the polls

PRESIDENT BILL Clinton's fight to survive impeachment got off to a rousing start yesterday as his ratings soared to record levels, stock-market worries proved unfounded and 30 former presidents appealed for a compromise. A CBS-New York Times poll showed his job-approval rating up 5 points since last week at 73 per cent, equalling his previous record just after the first disclosures about Monica Lewinsky in January. CNN-USA Today showed a 9-point jump, also to 73 per cent. In New York the two main Wall Street indices, the Dow and the Nasdaq, shot up during the first hour of trading, with the Dow gaining more than

100 points, banishing fears that the markets would be unsettled by Mr Clinton's plight. While insisting impeachment was "permanent" and had brought "profound disgrace" to Mr Clinton, former presidents Jimmy Carter and Gerald Ford called for a Senate censure rather than a trial as the first step towards healing a national wound that was "grievous and deepening". In a joint New York Times article they said Mr Clinton should acknowledge he lied under oath in exchange for a deal that he would not be prosecuted for perjury when he left office.



Calls for a compromise also came from editorials in newspapers across America. Washington in crisis. Pages 10 and 11

Blair under fire over support for bombing

TONY BLAIR last night was under fire from all sides for supporting President Bill Clinton in Operation Desert Fox without a clearly laid set of political objectives to be achieved by the bombing in Iraq. The "success" claimed by Mr Blair when he announced the ending of the bombing on Saturday was turning into a public relations fiasco as RAF pilots, a Labour peer, and the Tories criticised the campaign. Downing Street responded with claims that the bombing had been targeted at sites including the presidential bunker in Baghdad to fuel Saddam Hussein's fears of a coup. "The specific thinking behind these targets is to build on the fears

that Saddam has of a coup by his own officers," said the Prime Minister's official spokesman. But Lord Healey, the former Chancellor, said the diplomatic mission should have started before the bombing. "What they have done is very dangerous to the Western position in the Middle East because it strengthens all the extremist groups who want to overthrow all the regimes which have been friendly to us. We are seen very much as Mr Clinton's poodle," Lord Healey said on Radio Five Live. Downing Street said RAF pi-

lots who said they were "gutted" at being ordered to call off their last raid could not see the "full picture". With all the RAF crews back safely in Kuwait, the Tories ended the cross-party support for the air strikes and demanded to know what the point of them had been. William Hague, the Tory leader, last night said Saddam should not just be "kept in his cage but knocked off his perch". In Baghdad, Iraq's Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz said the strikes had killed 62 military personnel. He added that the attacks had ended UN arms inspections. The attacks "killed Unscam" he said, referring to the UN weapons inspectors. Saddam breathes easy, page 5

Alone but Traumatized



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TODAY'S TELEVISION

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Doctors battle to save octuplets

DOCTORS WERE fighting last night to save eight babies born to a woman in a Texas hospital.

On Sunday, Nkem Chukwu became the first woman to give birth to a living set of octuplets. All eight were in critical condition yesterday, with the newborns on ventilators. The oldest child, born at 22oz 12 days ago, was making progress, according to Leonard Weisman, head of the neonatology department at Texas Children's Hospital.

Dr Weisman said premature babies such as these have an 85 per cent chance of surviving. "They are all critically ill, though several are showing improvement," he said.

Mrs Chukwu was so anxious to keep her babies growing inside her that she spent three weeks lying still on a special hospital bed with her head tilted at a drastic angle to the floor.

Her uterus was so crowded that doctors weren't even sure how many foetuses were in there. They offered to abort one

or two to give the others a better chance of survival, but the tenacious Texas woman turned them down. Instead, she offered to give up food and drink and go on to an intravenous drip to give the babies more room.

The last seven, five girls and two boys weighing between 10.3 and 26 ounces, were delivered by Caesarean section at St Luke's Episcopal Hospital in Houston. They were immediately whisked into intensive care at another hospital where they joined their sister who was born vaginally 12 days earlier.

It is likely to be at least two months before the babies - assuming they survive - will be fit to go home. The oldest one was born 15 weeks premature and the others 13 weeks premature. A stage of development that would give a single foetus an 85 per cent chance of survival. The statistics for multiple births



Doctors Brian Kirshon (left), Patti Savrick and Leonard Weisman said the babies' condition was critical Reuters

are not known, but are likely to be significantly bleaker.

It was a remarkable achievement for all eight to make it out of the womb alive. Doctors praised the attitude of the 27-year-old mother, who was described by her paediatrician, Patti Savrick, as "a very unusual woman, both physically and personally."

"She is quite tall, at least six feet, and very focused, a very spiritual, serene person," Dr Savrick said. "She did what she needed to do."

"She was a model patient," said Brian Kirshon, an obstetrician specialising in high-risk births, who delivered the babies. "I think she is remarkable in that she was able to tolerate such conditions. She kept a positive attitude and was willing to do whatever it took."

Both Mrs Chukwu and her husband, Iyke, a respiratory therapist, are naturalised immigrants from Nigeria who had been trying unsuccessfully to

have children for some time. Using hormone fertility treatment to stimulate the production of ova, Mrs Chukwu became pregnant with triplets at the end of last year but lost them in the early stages.

She became pregnant again almost immediately and quickly understood she was carrying a large number of foetuses; she spent two-and-a-half-months in hospital under close observation. After the first birth, Mrs Chukwu was given strong drugs to halt uterine contractions, drugs that forced doctors to perform a post-natal operation yesterday to stop internal bleeding. The Caesarean was attended by 25 medical professionals.

Her case is likely to trigger debate about the wisdom of fertility treatment leading to multiple pregnancies, given the dangers and costs involved. While the children risk conditions such as cerebral palsy, blindness and heart and lung defects, the mother exposes herself to the risk of diabetes or acute high blood pressure.

"The human being was meant to have one baby," Dr Kirshon said. "It will be a remarkable feat if all the babies survive."

Mrs Chukwu is expected to stay in hospital until the end of the week, by which time doctors will have a better idea of her babies' chances of survival.

"All are being kept sleepy and quiet under a plastic blanket on a warming bed and have been treated with surfactant replacement to help with premature lung disease," Dr Weisman

said. "All infants are receiving intravenous sugar and fluids."

The medical costs alone are likely to reach half a million dollars - raising just the first of many questions about financial arrangements for the young couple, who live in a modest neighbourhood in south-west Houston.

Although doctors were careful to release as little information about the family as possible, it seems they have not yet tried to secure sponsors or other forms of assistance. In stark contrast to Mandy Allwood, the British woman who hired PR representatives to sell her story to the tabloids, the Chukwus wrapped the pregnancy in a veil of secrecy.

"[Mrs Chukwu] has gone to remarkable lengths to stay away from publicity and stay in a position where these children could be born," said a lawyer brought in by the hospital to deal with a deluge of media interest.

Parents of previous multiple-birth babies in the United States have sought corporate sponsorship and assistance through private fund-raising, with varying degrees of success. When Bobbi McCaughey gave birth to septuplets in Iowa last year, all of whom have survived, she and her husband Keaney were offered a newly built house, a 15-seater van, car seats, strollers, limitless nappies and a 16-year supply of apple juice and apple sauce.

By contrast, Linden and Jacqueline Thompson, parents of five surviving sextuplets born around the same time as the septuplets in Washington DC, received next to nothing until news reports suggested their raw deal was due to the fact they were black while the McCaugheys were white.

They have since received nappies, an offer of free day-care and clothing - but no car and only a reduced price on a house that they still cannot afford.

Author's £5m bequest provides poetic justice for Oxford college

BY JOHN WALSH

THE CONTROVERSIAL world of Oxford poetry received a pleasant shock yesterday with the news that an eccentric, and mostly unread, British author has bequeathed £5m to an Oxford college, to endow a fellowship specifically devoted to teaching students how to write poetry.

Christopher Tower, who died on 21 September aged 83, set up a foundation before his death for the creation of two senior teaching posts at his old college, Christchurch. One is a junior research fellowship in Greek mythology. The other, more importantly, is a Poetry Studentship - a modest title for a major academic job, teaching and lecturing in the black arts of metre, rhyme, scansion and sublimity, across the university.

Mr Tower's bequest will also pay for the running of the Christopher Tower Poetry Prize, an annual competition open to sixth-formers, in which the winning versifiers will secure a prize of £1,000 for their school as well as £1,000 for themselves. Mr Tower has thus cunningly ensured that schools all over the nation will encourage their students to write poetry at prize-winning levels of brilliance.

The Tower bequest could hardly have come at a better time for the Oxford English faculty. Ever since the Oxford University Press publishing house voted to drop its poetry list on 20 November, a state of hostility and resentment has prevailed in the university town. Expressions of sympathy for the 36 sacked poets - some of them world-famous, some tipped for the Poet Laureateship, some about to celebrate their career-crowning collected works - have filled the newspapers.

Heated views have been exchanged between university administrators, English literature dons and the unsmiling businessmen at the OUP - the press is owned by the university, and its decisions are carried out with the dons' blessing. "I am ashamed of my university press," writes Jon Stallworthy, English tutor at Wolfson College. In the current *Oxford Magazine*, calling the cancellation of the list "an act of vandalism".

Christopher Tower's bequest, therefore, gives the university a chance to make amends for its apparently philis-



Christopher Tower, painted by James Gunn

time, money-fixated, anti-poetic stance. "The benefaction is doubly welcome at a time when there is greater pressure on university and college funding from government, and when the Oxford University Press is closing down its poetry publishing section for commercial reasons," the Very Rev John Drury, Dean of Christchurch, said yesterday, hastening to reassure doubters that "English literature is a thriving subject at Christchurch", whose alumni include Sir Philip Sidney and W H Auden. "The importance of the

benefaction from Christopher Tower is that it strengthens the tradition of poetry in the college and university, and opens it out to all the schools in the country."

But who was the shadowy Mr Tower? He was a secretive, reclusive Englishman with a profound love of Arab lore, Greek topography and Mediterranean exoticism, but also a shrewd operator in Middle-Eastern realpolitik. He was also - piquantly in the current debate about the commercial value of serious poetry - a poet who could get his own verse published only by paying for it himself.

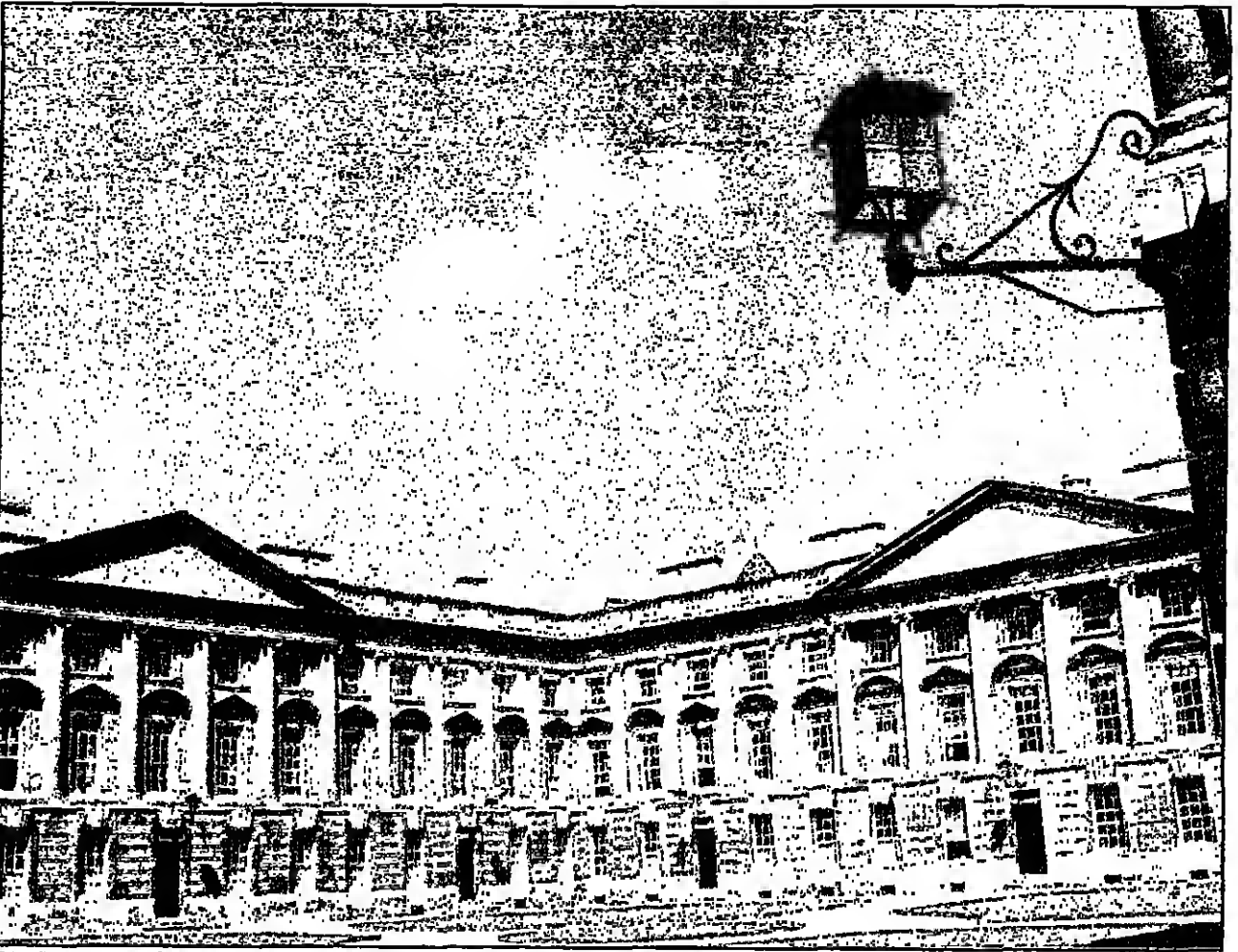
He was born in 1915 to a family of rich, property-owning diplomats. His father died in the First World War and, when his mother remarried, Christopher was packed off to a boarding school.

After graduating he went to Baghdad as private secretary to Sir Basil Newton, the British ambassador, learnt to speak Arabic, founded a camel corps and strode about in chieftain robes rather like Lawrence of Arabia. During the war he transferred to Libya, where, after hostilities ceased, he was empowered by the Foreign Office to set up a monarchy in Libya, under the Emir, King Idris. For the next six years he acted as chief adviser to the king. His advice ranged from high policy to low fashion statements. When the king wanted to have a sign put up over his palace saying "Palace of King Idris" in neon lights, Tower gently informed him that there was no similar sign at the end of the Mall saying "Palace of King George VI".

Then, abruptly, he gave it all up. He went on epic treks with Wilfred Thesiger. He lived a solitary life. No one seems to have known him well, not even his elder sister, Pamela. He never discussed what happened to make him leave Libya. He developed odd, quasi-Arab habits. He was insouciant about the earth tremors that occasionally rocked his huge apartment in Athens, which he furnished as an English stately home, complete with heavy chandeliers. When the next tremors came, he refused to be taken to safety, being too absorbed in one of the enormous jigsaws to which he was addicted.

He published several books of poems, most of them spectacularly unreadable retellings of ancient Persian legends. "I don't think he amounted to anything as a poet, I'm afraid," said his friend, Francis King, the novelist, yesterday. "But I loved his conversation."

He is buried in the village graveyard at Minstead in the New Forest, beside the grave of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. His friends are trying to persuade the vicar to let them put up a headstone based on a portrait showing Christopher Tower dressed in Arab finery, complete with imposing Tuareg dagger.



The bequests give Christchurch a Poetry Studentship and a research fellowship in Greek mythology David Hunter



FESTIVE?

Santas on transvestite charge

BY JOHN LICHFIELD

LIFE IS fraught for Santa Claus in the last days of December - but nowhere more so than in France. Freelance Santa Clauses who haunt the shopping boulevards of Paris are being hounded by the police, accused of being "transvestites" or "transvestites".

If that were not humiliating enough, almost all the big stores have closed down their grottoes and laid off their Santas, claiming lack of demand.

Under an ancient Parisian by-law, it is forbidden to "appear in disguise on a public thoroughfare", except at officially approved carnival times. The law is being applied rigorously this year at the demand of the big stores - the same premises that have refused to hire Santas and instead have put in their place magicians or toy-demonstrators.

The stores - Printemps, Galeries Lafayette and Samaritaine - have stalls on the pavement selling seasonal gifts. They resent their customers

being harassed by street photographers, who work with accomplices dressed in fading red robes and ill-fitting beards.

A newer law forbids street photographers from patrolling outside the stores. Instead of relying on this law alone, the police have been throwing both the new and old ("no disguises") chapters of the book at the Santa-and-snapper teams.

Michel and his colleague Bruno, who charge 30 francs (£5.50) a picture have paid out several instant fines of £100 to £150 a time. Michel says he has

found himself on the unusual charge of "taking photographs without permission on a public road in the company of a transvestite" ("transvestite" can also mean "a person in fancy-dress" but it usually means a cross-dresser).

The photographers protest that life is already hard enough. "Most people are only interested in the moving displays in the shop windows," said Michel. "All we get these days is a few people in from the provinces who've forgotten their cameras."



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Crash victim gets record £9m damages

A STUDENT left almost completely paralysed by a car accident was yesterday awarded record damages of up to £9.25m at the High Court.

Martijn Biesheuvel, from the Netherlands, had been studying at university in Britain when he was injured in May 1994. Now aged 27, he has almost no use of any of his limbs. The money - more than twice the largest previous payout - will help pay for round-the-clock care and for "pain, suffering and loss of amenity".

Mr Biesheuvel, who now lives in Amsterdam, was one of four Bath University students who were on their way for a game of football when they crashed into the rear of parked cars. Mr Biesheuvel was sitting in the back seat but was not wearing a seat-belt.

The driver, Andrew Birrell, later pleaded guilty to dangerous driving. His motor insurers admitted primary liability but disputed the amount of damages that had been claimed.

At the High Court yesterday, Richard Davies QC, for Mr Birrell, argued that Mr Biesheuvel had been partly to blame because he should have re-

BY ANDREW BUNCOMBE

alised that Mr Birrell was driving in a dangerous manner. "He allowed himself to be driven and continue to be driven by Mr Birrell when he knew or ought reasonably to have known that he... was driving at an excessive speed and or carelessly and dangerously."

But the judge, Mr Justice Eady, rejected the claim and said he was satisfied that the impact which caused Mr Biesheuvel's injuries had started with an upward movement. After hearing from an expert, the judge said it did not seem to be seriously contended that a seat-belt would have made any difference.

The court heard that prior to the accident Mr Biesheuvel had been due to take up a job with the City accountants Deloitte and Touche. Ken Chalk, a senior partner in the firm, said Mr Biesheuvel could have been earning £500,000 a year had the accident not wrecked his career.

Mr Biesheuvel's girlfriend, Mariela Godding, 25, broke down last month as she told the court of constant care her boyfriend needs. "There are so

many things during the day he needs help with. For instance if he drops something on the floor he can't pick it up," she said. "It is not nice to say but it is like leaving a four-year-old child on his own. It is a danger and anything could happen."

The judge granted leave to appeal on the issues of liability and amount - which will be decided precisely after further discussions between lawyers. The court was told the award will be between £8m and £9.25m.

The previous highest damages award, in November, was to Helen Edwards, now 17, who was left brain-damaged, blind, and unable to feed or talk after she had a heart attack during an operation to remove a birthmark from her forehead. She received more than £4m.

A child who suffered brain damage after being given blood of the wrong type during a transfusion was yesterday awarded £2.4m damages. James Green suffered convulsions and heart failure after the "mismatch" at the Princess Alexandra Hospital, Harlow, Essex. The blood was intended for another patient with the same name.



Martijn Biesheuvel, whose life was wrecked by the car crash injuries he suffered four years ago

Photomove

Nasa loses control of probe

BY STEVE CONNOR
Science Editor

SCIENTISTS HAVE lost contact with a £138m space probe designed to rendezvous with an asteroid the size of central London in January.

The American National Aeronautics and Space Administration (Nasa) is attempting to regain control of the Near spacecraft, currently more than 200m miles from Earth, by sending a series of command signals once every three hours.

Helen Worth, a spokeswoman for the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory in Laurel, Maryland, said: "We're still optimistic. We just have to find an avenue of communication."

The Near probe was launched in 1996 and has travelled about 1.5 billion miles on its indirect route to the Eros asteroid, which is currently about 240m miles from Earth.

Nasa lost contact early yesterday morning after attempting to fire the spacecraft's rocket engines as part of the first stage in the sequence of rendezvous manoeuvres.

Near was scheduled to orbit the Eros asteroid for 12 months, mapping its magnetic and gravitational fields and analysing its mineral composition. Scientists had hoped to bring it within feet of its surface, even perhaps to attempt a soft landing.

Workers frown on substance abuse

WORKERS ARE increasingly unwilling to put up with colleagues who drink during working hours and far more likely to inform on them than they used to be, according to a new study.

Intolerance of "substance abuse" ranges from people who have serious drink and drugs problems to those who pop out to the pub at lunch time, says a survey conducted for the Institute of Personnel and Development.

"Ten years ago many people used to go out for a liquid lunch, but it is no longer as acceptable as it was," said Oonagh Ryden, a policy adviser at the institute.

Ms Ryden believes the growing tendency to tell management about colleagues' drinking or drug taking is based on anxiety over people's welfare and concern over the impact of such substances on work performance.

The survey of 1,800 company personnel specialists found that some 46 per cent of companies had received reports of alcohol abuse by staff during the last year, compared with 35 per cent in 1996 - an increase

BY BARRIE CLEMENT
Labour Editor

"People have become intolerant of colleagues suffering from hangovers whose ability to do their job is impaired. They get fed up covering up for them," she said.

Organisations are increasingly banning alcohol from their premises and insisting that none is consumed during key working hours, Ms Ryden said.

New management techniques are also more adept at exposing "under-performance". The productivity of hundreds of thousands of staff at call centres throughout Britain is monitored minute by minute.

The survey of 1,800 company personnel specialists found that some 46 per cent of companies had received reports of alcohol abuse by staff during the last year, compared with 35 per cent in 1996 - an increase

of 11 per cent. Around 18 per cent of firms had received reports of illegal drug taking - an increase of 3 per cent.

Despite the trend, many companies had no policies on drugs or alcohol. Nearly 40 per cent of respondents said their organisations had no alcohol policy and nearly half did not have a drugs policy.

Programmes on alcohol and drug awareness for staff were even rarer, according to the study. Only 17 per cent reported such an initiative towards alcohol and just 15 per cent towards drugs.

More than eight out of 10 personnel officers said that managers and supervisors in their companies were not trained to recognise substance abuse.

Ms Ryden said employers had a duty to maintain health and safety at work and could not afford to be complacent.

'Cardiff Three' released on bail

BY MIKE TAYLOR

THREE MEN who have spent more than 11 years in jail for a murder they say they did not commit were yesterday freed on bail pending a renewed appeal against their convictions.

The "Cardiff Three" - Michael O'Brien, Ellis Sherwood and Darren Hall - will be released from prison today. O'Brien is in Gartree prison, Leicestershire, and the other two in Whitmore jail, Cambridgeshire.

Last month, the Criminal Cases Review Commission ruled that their conviction of murdering Philip Saunders, a newsagent in Cardiff, should be referred back to the Court of Appeal. Yesterday, after a private hearing in London, Mr Justice Hooper granted bail at £5,000 each.

Lawyers said later the judge had emphasised that the granting of bail should not be taken as an indication that the renewed appeal would succeed. But the judge had said that a number of features in the case were similar to earlier appeals in which miscarriages of justice had been established.

Mr Saunders was attacked near his home in October 1987 and robbed of his takings.

The findings of the Review Commission are believed to have identified possible breaches of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act.

IN BRIEF

Man charged with four rapes

A MAN accused of rape and other sex attacks against women across South-east England yesterday appeared before Hove magistrates' court in London on 21 charges. Richard Baker, 34, originally from Bodmin, Cornwall, is charged with five indecent assaults, four rapes and one attempted rape. He is also charged with nine threats to kill and two counts of actual bodily harm.

Nobel Prize biologist dies at 84

THE NOBEL Prize winner Professor Sir Alan Hodgkin, one of Britain's most distinguished biologists, has died aged 84. Sir Alan, who died at his Cambridge home after a long illness, won the Nobel Prize for medicine in 1963 along with Professor Andrew Huxley and Sir John Eccles. They discovered how nerve cells transmit electrical impulses from the skin to the brain and back again.

Arrest in child murder inquiry

NORFOLK POLICE re-arrested a man yesterday on suspicion of murdering Thomas Marshall, aged 12, whose body was found in August last year in a lay-by near Thetford, 50 miles from his home in Happisburgh, Norfolk. The suspect, aged 51, was originally arrested on 15 September this year, and released without charge.

Success for kidney donor, 77

A 77-YEAR-OLD great grandfather was passed fit yesterday after becoming Britain's oldest live organ donor. Medical check-ups on Doug Gibson, from Buckinghamshire, and his son, also Doug, 51, from Rossendale, Lancashire, confirmed that both men's kidneys are working well after the donor operation two months ago.

Supermarket trolley seats four

SAINSBURY'S is testing an estate-style trolley which can carry four children and a load of shopping. Two children, aged two to eight, can sit on comfortable, bright blue seats attached to the back of the trolley while babies sit at the front. The trolley is being trialled at stores at Walford Dome Roundabout and Coreys Mill, Stevenage, Herts.

DAVID AARONOVITCH

I do not care to be the agent of death among the deprived tots of Basra

IN THE TUESDAY REVIEW PAGE 3

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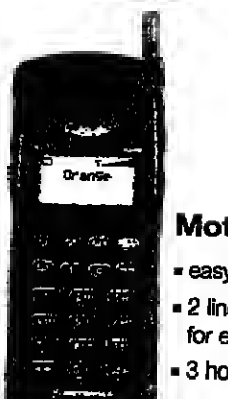


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50 من الاموال

Now Saddam breathes easy again

"I BELIEVE he will die of natural causes," said an Iraqi in Baghdad. No need to ask the identity of the "he" to whom he referred.

Saddam Hussein, the Iraqi leader, has survived the three-day air assault by the United States and Britain with little sign that his regime is politically weaker. In addition, one senior diplomat in Baghdad said yesterday, "Iraq is in a better position diplomatically than it was before."

It was a perfect military operation - missiles decapitated tall buildings in Baghdad with almost unerring accuracy. But the political plan behind the bombardment is more difficult to detect.

Obviously, it was to do with "degrading" Iraq's capacity to produce chemical and biological weapons and the means to deliver them. But Iraq had a large arsenal of such weapons in the 1991 Gulf War and did not use them because it was prevented from doing so by allied military superiority and the threat of retaliation. Iraq is unlikely to consider using them now.

Even if the worst-case suspicions of Unscm (the United Nations special committee in charge of eliminating such weapons) are correct, Iraq has only a limited quantity left. The real cutting edge of containment for Washington and London is sanctions and, with the Gulf War coalition more fractured than ever after the American and British action, these will be increasingly difficult to maintain.

It all started with an Iraqi diplomatic miscalculation. Baghdad had hoped to keep the political water hot - but not boiling. In February, the Iraqis achieved a psychological victory when Kofi Annan, the UN Secretary-General, flew to Baghdad, met with Saddam Hussein and averted an allied air attack at the last minute.

Baghdad seems to have interpreted this as a sign of weakness. It thought that if it kept pushing it could marginalise Unscm and get a general review of sanctions and Unscm's activities. On 5 August, Iraq broke off negotiations with Richard Butler, the head of Unscm. On 31 October it ended all fresh inspections.

When Iraq suddenly found itself diplomatically isolated, it opened the way for military action. A foreign source in Baghdad said yesterday: "There is no doubt that the Iraqi leadership was shocked by what happened. They were practising brinkmanship and suddenly they found they had stepped over the brink."

But it turned out better than expected. The three days of strikes was nothing like the prolonged pounding of the six-week air war in 1991. Above all,

BY PATRICK COCKBURN
in Baghdad

the power stations and refineries, with the exception of one in Basra, were not hit.

This was a strange conflict. The most significant technology involved was cruise missiles. Smart bombs - and the massed ranks of foreign television cameras on the roof of the Iraqi Ministry of Information. This gave the impression of a far more extensive war than was in fact being waged. It also limited the extent to which the allies could risk civilian casualties, one strike on a market place and the dead and wounded would be shown within seconds on television screens across the world.

Iraq's Deputy Prime Minister, Tariq Aziz, said yesterday that 62 soldiers were killed and 180 injured in the air strikes. This was the first official death toll from the punishing assault. Mr Aziz said civilian casualties were "much, much higher than military casualties", but refused to elaborate.

But, however accurate the missiles, accuracy counts for nothing without intelligence about what to hit. Most of the big buildings in Iraq were evacuated weeks ago. The same may be true of machine tools from plants. One resident of Baghdad who wanted to get a new number plate for a car stamped was told to come back after the bombing because the necessary piece of simple machinery had been "dispersed".

The same is true of the infrastructure which sustains the regime. It consists not of buildings but personnel, and these are mobile. At the lowest level this was evident on the streets of Baghdad over the last week. Standing on some street corners, armed militias of the ruling Baath party were clutching their guns. Others, more discreet, concealed their sub-machine guns from the former Yugoslavia under their coats.

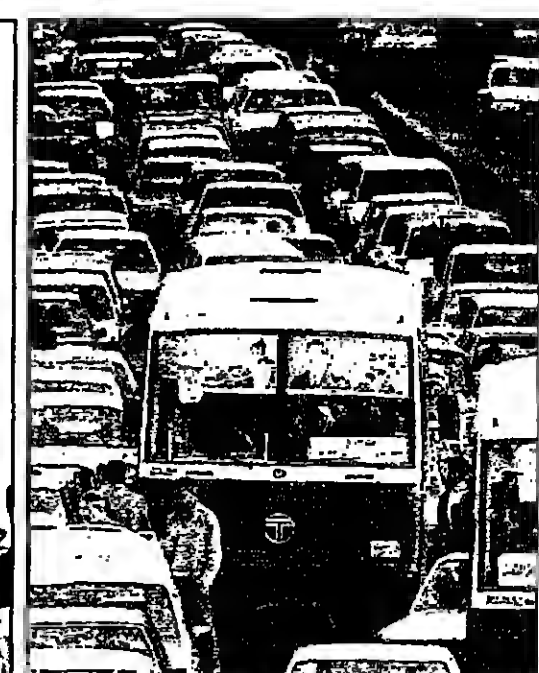
In order to be able to react immediately to any sign of an uprising, President Saddam divided Iraq into military districts, each placed under a trusted lieutenant. Ali Hassan al-Majid, a cousin of the Iraqi leader, was in charge of the south; he confirmed his reputation for ruthlessness by using chemical weapons against the Kurds in 1988. Izzat Ibrahim al-Douri, the Vice-President, was put in charge of the northern areas facing Kurdistan. Another leader known for his loyalty took charge of the mid-Euphrates region containing Kerbala and Najaf and the holy cities of the Iraqi Shia Muslims, which are always the centre of dissent.

All the new appointments were of men who had played leading roles in crushing the great rebellions of the Shias and the Kurds in 1991.



An Iraqi looking for his belongings in rubble yesterday after his house in Baghdad was hit by a missile during the Anglo-American air attacks

Patrick Baz/AFP



Left to right: An Iraqi woman resuming daily life in Basra; the Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister, Tariq Aziz, yesterday telling journalists in Baghdad that 62 military personnel were killed and 180 wounded in the air strikes, but civilian casualties were much higher; Baghdad's rush hour returning to normal yesterday

Reuters

Most pieces on the Iraqi military chessboard are unchanged by the missile war. Television around the world was impressed by the ferocity of the assault. Many Iraqis and the governments of neighbouring countries, on the contrary, notice its limitations in time and target list.

The only part of Iraq outside the control of the Iraqi government is most of Kurdistan in the north. This was a safe haven for the Iraqi opposition before Saddam Hussein took its capital.

Artillery, with its tanks in 1996. Seeing the Iraqi leader still firmly in power after the attack, the Kurds are unlikely to risk another incursion by allowing the opposition to return.

For seven years, containment of Iraq consisted of sanctions justified by Iraqi resistance to Unscm inspections. This containment required international consensus. Some diplomats in Baghdad believe that consensus is now broken. The factories that Unscm was monitoring have been destroyed. Since it is claiming a victory, Baghdad is unlikely to allow the inspectors back in without getting sanctions lifted in return.

Yesterday, Mr Aziz declared that the UN weapons inspection program was over. "Iraq cannot tolerate the embargo and Unscm. We did not damage our relations with the United Nations. They [the US and Britain] damaged the United Nations itself," he said. "They killed Unscm. Unscm is their casualty," he said.

cannot tolerate the embargo and Unscm. We did not damage our relations with the United Nations. They [the US and Britain] damaged the United Nations itself," he said. "They killed Unscm. Unscm is their casualty," he said.

Cook embarks on telephone diplomacy to seek support

REJECTING CRITICISM at home and abroad, Britain stuck to a hard line on Iraq yesterday, insisting that tough sanctions should stay and that despite everything that had happened, United Nations weapons inspectors could and should return to Baghdad.

Hours before a deeply divided UN Security Council met in New York to consider what to do next in the Gulf, the Foreign Office minister Derek Fatchett made clear that Britain would not go along with "consensus at any price".

There could be "no easy rewards" for President Saddam Hussein after his defiance of UN resolutions and the refusal to cooperate with the Unscm in-

BY RUPERT CORNWELL

spectors. It would now be "more difficult" to embark on the comprehensive review of sanctions desired by Baghdad than before, Mr Fatchett said.

As he spoke, Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, embarked on a round of telephone diplomacy aimed at shoring up support among European and Arab countries - at best lukewarm and sometimes downright hostile to last week's bombardment - and at showing that Britain did have a longer-term policy towards Iraq.

That policy is based on three notions: "containment", or reducing the military threat posed by President Saddam; continu-



Derek Fatchett: 'No easy rewards for Saddam'

ing progress on ridding Iraq of its biological, chemical and nuclear weapons, preferably through the Unscm mechanism; and some action to ease the hardships of civilians.

On the last point - of particular sensitivity given the charges that sanctions have caused hunger and disease among civilians - Mr Cook did receive some comfort yesterday at a meeting with his German opposite number, Joschka Fischer. The idea is for a European Union initiative to tackle humanitarian needs not being catered for by the UN oil-for-food programme.

But there Britain and the United States begin to part company with their allies. Mr Fischer underlined the need to create circumstances where a similar showdown need not occur. That would be a "difficult challenge for all parties", he said, implicitly

calling for compromise. This, too, is broadly the Paris line, but France's objections to last week's raids run deeper. The French feel sanctions are close to exhausting their usefulness: "We should go towards a lifting of the embargo," the Foreign Minister, Hubert Vedrine, said on French radio yesterday.

Difficulties also loom for the UN's inspection mission. Tacitly, even Britain acknowledges that a return of the old-style Unscm is not on the cards. But any modified system seems bound to be even weaker. Nor is Britain prepared to sacrifice Richard Butler, the Unscm chief who is said to be a US stooge. "We have confidence in Mr Butler," Mr Fatchett said.

Bunker targeted to encourage coup

SADDAM HUSSEIN'S presidential bunker was targeted by US and RAF bombers as part of a plan to topple the Iraqi dictator, by encouraging a coup among his senior military officers, the Government said yesterday.

It released more details of the bombing of 100 targets in an attempt to convince people in Britain that it was effective, and it was following a long-term plan to bring down Saddam.

With Tony Blair facing sharper criticism about the lack of a clear objective for the raids, the Prime Minister's official spokesman lashed out at

BY COLIN BROWN
Chief Political Correspondent

Michael Howard, the Tory spokesman on foreign affairs, accusing him of possessing "the intellectual grip of a baby" after suggesting the US and Britain effectively should have set out to kill the dictator. "It is absurd. It is a ridiculous argument," said the spokesman.

Some of the criticism came from pilots who took part in the raids. Downing Street refused to confirm or deny they would be reprimanded for speaking out, but said "individual pilots could not have the big picture".

Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, spent the day holding telephone discussions with European and Arab leaders to try to build support for new non-military action against Iraq.

One of the clear aims of the bombing was to encourage a renewed attempt at a coup by high-ranking officers surrounding Saddam by attacking his Republican Guard, destroying his command and control communications, and hitting his presidential bunker and residence in Baghdad.

"The specific thinking behind

these targets is to build on to the fears that Saddam has of a coup by his own officers," said the spokesman.

There were reports of Iraqi troop movements "that are thought to deal with the possibility of uprisings they fear", added the spokesman.

"Because of his fears about a coup against him and particularly because a series of attempts have been made, he takes most of the important decisions himself. His internal communications have been badly damaged. It will be difficult for him to get his messages

out to his military infrastructure. That will be causing him difficulties."

The latest assessments of sites hit were: 30 were involved with the production of "weapons of mass destruction", 20 were command facilities and communications networks, and nine were connected with the Republican Guard. Attacks on 35 targets "have left the Iraqi air defence system in ruins" and six successfully hit targets related to remotely piloted planes designed to deliver Iraq's chemical and biological weapons.

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BY PAUL MCCANN
Media Editor

But that would be to underestimate the power of the Richard Bransoo publicity machine.

Libya was the first to oblige. It is only the first country a global balloonist hits when heading west from Morocco, but somehow permission to fly over it had not been secured until a "dramatic" last-minute message from Branson personally to Colonel Gaddafi.

At take-off, accompanied by 400 hired nomads, and almost as many journalists at the Marrakesh "news centre", a few small holes appeared in the fabric of the balloon, allowing a few small stories to appear.



Richard Branson is seen off on his latest adventure by his wife and daughter, left, flying over the Himalayas, centre, on a journey that sees him dodge a war and two no-fly zones ... so far

But barely does the ICO Global Balloon clear North Africa and the stories improve. Reports in the Sunday papers have the whole trip threatened by a sick Branson. He is hit by "dry lung syndrome" - an illness similar to a sore throat except that it affects people in balloons with their own press officers.

But miraculously the ailing millionaire recovers enough by the next day to take the helm of the balloon for the most thrilling part of the journey so far. Like Biggles cloned with Scott of the Antarctic, Branson now steers his balloon between not one hut two "no fly zones". Ducking and weaving like only

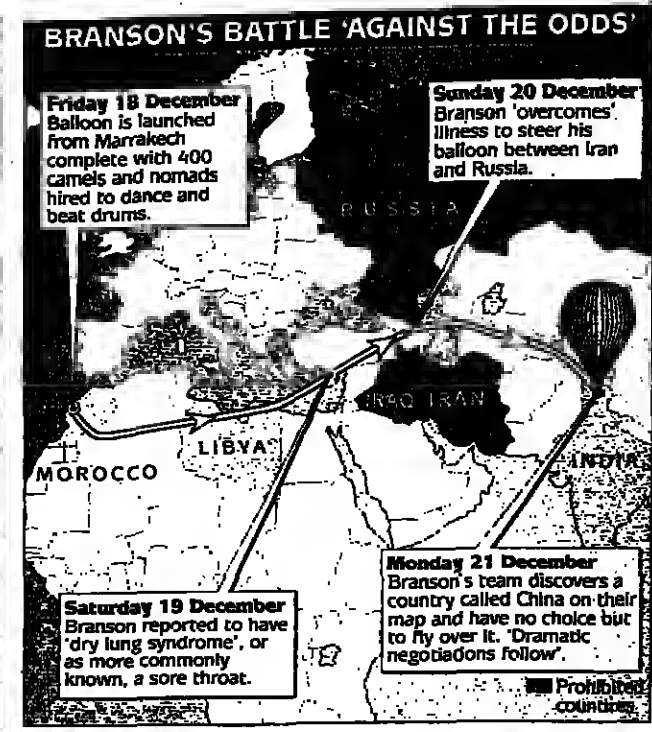
Without a trace of irony Mike Kendrick, the project director, declares on Sunday that there had been "an average of 2.6 crises a day" since the balloo launched: "It has been a difficult fight so far, but we are settling down a bit oow."

But no, by yesterday morning the team has discovered it cannot fly over the bit of China it promised to and the Chinese are planning to refuse permission to fly any other way. Being no mean slouches at publicity themselves, Downing Street swings into action to try to secure free passage.

The publicity operation that is taking Branson around the world is led by his Virgin Group publicity guru, Jackie McQuillan. With Will Whitehorn, his long-time adviser, also at his side, Branson and Virgin have some of the most skilled publicity people in the business. For a long time the group eschewed

The publicity team is helped by public interest in Branson himself. "People are interested in him," says an insider who once worked in publicity for the Virgin empire. "But they have

"The balloon doesn't have Virgin written on the side and he's given up wearing wedding dresses and other stupid stunts. There was a time when Richard would show up to the opening of an envelope if he thought he'd get a headline."



VIRGIN TRAINS, the railway subsidiary of the ballooning

millionaire Richard Branson, provided "no effective service" for a total of 148 days across different parts of the network over the past year.

The extent of delays and hold-ups on sections of its empire was so severe on these days that Virgin declared them "void" - which means they do not count in government performance tables. The tables are used to determine whether season-ticket holders are entitled to discounts because of poor service.

In exchange for this opt-out, the train company has to give monthly season-ticket holders a day's extension or arrange similar compensation. But regulators are concerned the void-day rule means the performance tables do not give a proper guide to service levels.

Figures published by the Department for the Environment, Transport and the Regions, showed that Virgin declared 148 days "void" over the 12 months to November 14.

contributed 120 of these days - 36 on its West Midlands routes, 37 on its North West Group and 47 for Scotland. Its Cross-Country network of InterCity services, which do not go via London, declared 28 days void. Virgin said it had been af-

BY PHILIP THORNTON
Transport Correspondent

fectured by extremely poor weather, such as flooding in Scotland last Christmas and in the Midlands at Easter.

Across the rail network a total of 343 days were declared void. Other "voiders" included Central Trains with 48 days, Silverlink, the north London and Home Counties commuter service, with 39, and Great Western Trains with 27.

The Transport minister Glenda Jackson said the Office of Passenger Rail Franchising (Opfra) would include the number of void days in its next quarterly bulletin of train performance, due in February. The last bulletin showed reliability and punctuality fell below levels achieved by British Rail.

They showed Virgin triggered discounts on three route groups. More than a quarter of West Coast Scottish trains were late, while more than 15 per cent of West Coast North West and Virgin CrossCountry were late. These did not include void days. Monthly figures published tomorrow are expected to show.

Virgin produced its own passenger charter this month, which offers vouchers worth 25 per cent of the ticket price for passengers delayed an hour, and the full price for those delayed by two hours.

A BARONET vicar who lived on a council estate and drove

The Reverend Sir James Roll presided over the run-down parish of St John's Church in Dorset.

Church in Dagenham, Essex, from 1958 to 1983. He kept his largely self-made fortune a secret until after he died in February this year, aged 87. It was accumulated by investment rather than being inherited with the title. Its size was only disclosed when his will was published this week.

Lynn Foster, a friend and former St John's church warden, said: "I thought we would have to raise money for his funeral, so I was stunned to hear of how much he left. I knew he had some money but he invested it wisely in insurance schemes and that must have been his secret."

Other colleagues remember a kind man whose only close companion was a terrier called Lucy. "He was the archetypal scruffy old vicar with a heart of gold," said the Rev Roger Gaylor, of the

BY TOM NEWTON DUNN


neighbouring St Mark's Church "His dog-collar didn't fit, his mac had certainly seen better days, he drove a battered old van and lived in an ordinary house on a council estate which was owned by the Water Board. He wasn't mean - money just didn't mat-

Sir James left £200,000 to a variety of animal, homeless and children's charities, but the bulk of his fortune went to his step-sister and other distant relatives. He also left £10,000 to St Clement's Church, Leigh-on-Sea, where he had a home to which he took poor children on holiday.

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Protocetus, an 'archaeocete' descendent of the newly found Himalayan whale Natural History Museum

World's oldest whale is found in the Himalayas

A FOSSILISED jawbone of the world's oldest whale has been discovered in the foothills of the Himalayas - a part of the world that was once a sea separating two ancient continents.

The find sheds new light on the evolution of one of the most successful groups of sea mammals, which became adapted to a semi-aquatic life in river estuaries and shallow seas before becoming fully marine.

Scientists have dated the fossil to about 53.5 million years old, making it 3.5 million years older than the previous oldest known member of the whale family.

The ancient whale, called *Himalayacetus subathuensis*, probably only spent some of its time in water, returning to dry land to rest and breed.

Its jawbone contains teeth that are clearly adapted to eating fish, according to Philip Gingerich, of the University of Michigan, and Sunil Bajpai, of the University of Roorkee, in northern India.

In a paper published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, the scientists say the fossil is a significant find because of both its extreme age and because it was found in a layer of sediments clearly associated with marine animals rather than freshwater species.

H. subathuensis is considerably older than a more recent whale ancestor, *Pakicetus*, which has also been linked with the ancient Tethys Sea separating Asia and the Indian subcontinent before they collided to form the Himalayan mountains.

Pakicetus is believed to have been the ancestor of the first truly ancient whale, *archaeocetus*, a fish-eater that grew to about the size of a modern porpoise and lived more than 35 million years ago.

"When first described, *pakicetus* was interpreted as an amphibious initial stage of whale evolution that rested and reproduced on land and entered Tethys opportunistically to feed on fish," the scientists say.

The latest fossil jawbone was recovered from a sedimentary layer 100 metres deeper than previous *pakicetus* finds, Bajpai and Gingerich say. "This not only extends the fossil record of *Cetacea* (the whale family) back in time, but also reinforces the idea that whales originated on the margin of Tethys and corroborates interpretation of *pakicetus* as an initial amphibious stage of cetacean evolution entering Tethys to feed on fish."

The chemical composition of other early whale fossils showed evidence of life in freshwater rather than sea environments. Analysis of phosphate in the newly discovered fossil teeth revealed values half way between those associated with freshwater and sea-living species, the scientists report.

"*Himalayacetus* came from a shallow, oyster-bearing marine deposit, whereas *Pakicetus* and the other oldest *pakicetus* known previously came from continental red beds and were found in association with land mammals," they say.

Although modern whales have lost their hind legs, their earlier ancestors evidently had functional limbs that allowed them to roam around on land. *Archaeocetus* had two vestigial hind legs that protruded from its body but which seemed to serve little or no function. Further adaptations allowed modern whales to exploit the rich ocean environment to become, in the case of the blue whale, the largest animal on Earth.

Mother's murder: man is charged

A MAN WAS charged yesterday with the murder of Sharon Lester, whose two-year-old daughter was found dead on Sunday night, left in a rubbish bag on wasteland.

Ms Lester, 22, was found at her home in Kensington, Liverpool, on Saturday. She had been beaten and repeatedly stabbed. Her daughter, Jade, was discovered close to a reservoir.

John Park, 24, spoke yesterday only to confirm his name during a four-minute hearing before magistrates in Liverpool. An unemployed joiner of Kensington, Liverpool, he is charged with murdering Ms Lester between 12 and 19 December.

He is also accused of burgling her home in Ling Street on 19 December and stealing property.

Mr Park, wearing a grey sweatshirt and tracksuit bottoms, was remanded into police custody. He will reappear in court later this week. There was no application for bail by the defence solicitor, Gerry Bowen, and reporting restrictions were not lifted.

A nationwide hunt was launched for Jade after her mother's body was found in a recess under stairs in the back dining room of her terraced house on Saturday.

Detective Superintendent Russ Walsh told a press conference yesterday that Ms Lester was a devoted mother. "She was extremely devoted and Jade was a well-cared-for child and well-loved. The family themselves are absolutely devastated."

He said they had still been unable to trace Jade's father. "Unfortunately, Sharon did not divulge the name of the father to her family. We are having great difficulty in tracking the father down."

"If the father is aware of what's happened then we would like him to contact us. It's quite important to the investigation that we trace him."

Mr Walsh said Jade was found by a team of officers including two women constables on waste ground near a reservoir. Her fully clothed body was found in a bin bag, which had been tied with string and left in an overgrown grassy area, where it was hidden from view.

Police heading the investigation said that they had traced two men seen in a white van close to the house in Ling Road and had ruled them out of the inquiry. "They both came forward and have been eliminated in terms of involvement in the offence."

A second man, seen in a yellow van, still has not been traced, he added.

Police are still awaiting the results of a post-mortem examination to discover exactly how Jade died. So far no one has been questioned about her death.



Sharon Lester had been beaten and stabbed

New test detects cancer earlier

A TEST for cervical cancer that can detect changes in the cells at an earlier stage than existing methods and could reduce misdiagnoses has been developed by scientists.

The system, which uses infra-red light to analyse the chemical composition of cells, can spot those in the earliest stage of becoming cancerous before the changes are visible under the microscope.

The discovery, by US researchers from Rockefeller University in New York, and the biotech company Digilab, in Cambridge, Massachusetts, is the third advance reported in the past 10 days which, it is claimed, could improve the accuracy of screening.

The others involve the use of antibodies to mark abnormal cells with a telltale dye to make them easier to recognise, and a technique of "liquid cytology" in which the cervical cells to be examined are first dispersed in liquid before being spread out on the slide to make them easier to see.

The latest development, reported in the US journal *Proceedings of the Academy of Sciences*, involved a study of cells taken from 10 healthy women, seven women with the pre-malignant stage of cervical cancer known as dysplasia and five with cervical cancer.

Sainsbury's. Eat, drink and save money this Christmas.

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Why I'm battling against the euro, by Lord Owen

THE MAN dubbed "Dr Death" will spring back into political life early in the new year. Lord Owen will launch a group that will be pro-European but opposed to early British entry into the single currency.

The former Labour foreign secretary and leader of the now defunct Social Democratic Party (SDP), who today speaks rarely about domestic politics, told *The Independent* he felt in "sympathy" with Tony Blair's Government.

"I see New Labour as a vindication of most of what the SDP did," he said. "I am very pleased with what has happened."

Lord Owen was loathed by Labour critics who believed he should fight his corner rather than found the SDP and renamed him Dr Death for the damage they claimed he was doing to the party - and he remains a hate figure to them. But he insists that the breakaway party had "a very important influence" in forcing Labour to modernise. "Labour had the shock of its life in 1983, when it saw those SDP posters on its council estates," he said.

He revealed that he now met Mr Blair "from time to time" but would not elaborate. "I think Blair is doing very well, though it's early days. In personal terms, he has done well on Northern Ireland. He is right to make education a priority."

BY ANDREW GRICE
Political Editor

While welcoming Labour's constitutional reforms, he warned: "We are in slight danger of constitutional indigestion. You can go too fast; you need to pace yourself. Improving education and Britain's competitiveness and modernising the country are the important issues."

Despite his admiration for Mr Blair, the 60-year-old life peer, who sits defiantly as an Independent Social Democrat in the Lords, will be on the opposite side of the fence to the Prime Minister when he launches his new think-tank.

"I am not going back into party politics," he emphasised repeatedly. "My political life died with the SDP. I am out of it, I want to stay out of it."

Lord Owen said the group, which he will chair, would provide "education and information" about the historic decision facing Britain. Although it will campaign alongside the diffuse 30-plus groups hostile to the euro if Mr Blair calls a referendum, Lord Owen has refused requests to head an umbrella "No" group. At this stage, his think-tank "does not want to be associated with people who have a long track record of scepticism and lack of enthusiasm for Europe."

Other members of his group include Lord Prior, the former Tory cabinet minister, now chairman of GEC, and Martin Taylor, who has just stood down as chief executive of Barclays Bank.

Lord Owen promised that there would be people "from all walks of life, whose hallmark is a lifetime of commitment to the European Union. We are serious Europeans who are worried about any rapid movement to a single currency." He insisted: "It will not be a group of old stagers and old harts. We will involve the younger generation."

Lord Owen is convinced that the other groups opposing the euro are wrong to start the "No" campaign now, since that might help to make a referendum inevitable.

Despite growing speculation that Mr Blair will arrange a poll shortly after the next general election, Lord Owen said: "It is perfectly possible we will never have a referendum. I don't deny that maybe his [Mr Blair's] inclination would be to go in if he saw a window of opportunity in the opinion polls. But I think we could mount a very effective referendum

campaign, even if we started behind in the polls."

"What is at issue is the self-confidence of Britain as a self-governing nation. The disadvantages are clear. You are in a straitjacket. You cannot change your exchange rate or interest rates."

Lord Owen insisted that Britain could still play an important role in the EU while remaining outside the euro. "We might have to be taken more seriously than if we just become absorbed by the 12 joining members."

Nor would membership

boost Mr Blair's hopes of joining the Franco-German alliance. "They are the dynamic, the reason the EU exists today. It would be very foolish to believe that could be changed. I don't think it will ever become a trilateral relationship."

He will not say that Britain should never join the euro. "There may be circumstances where you might see substantial economic advantages, but you would have to be sure that the EU would not become a United States of Europe. A major battle has to be fought for the next five to ten years. If

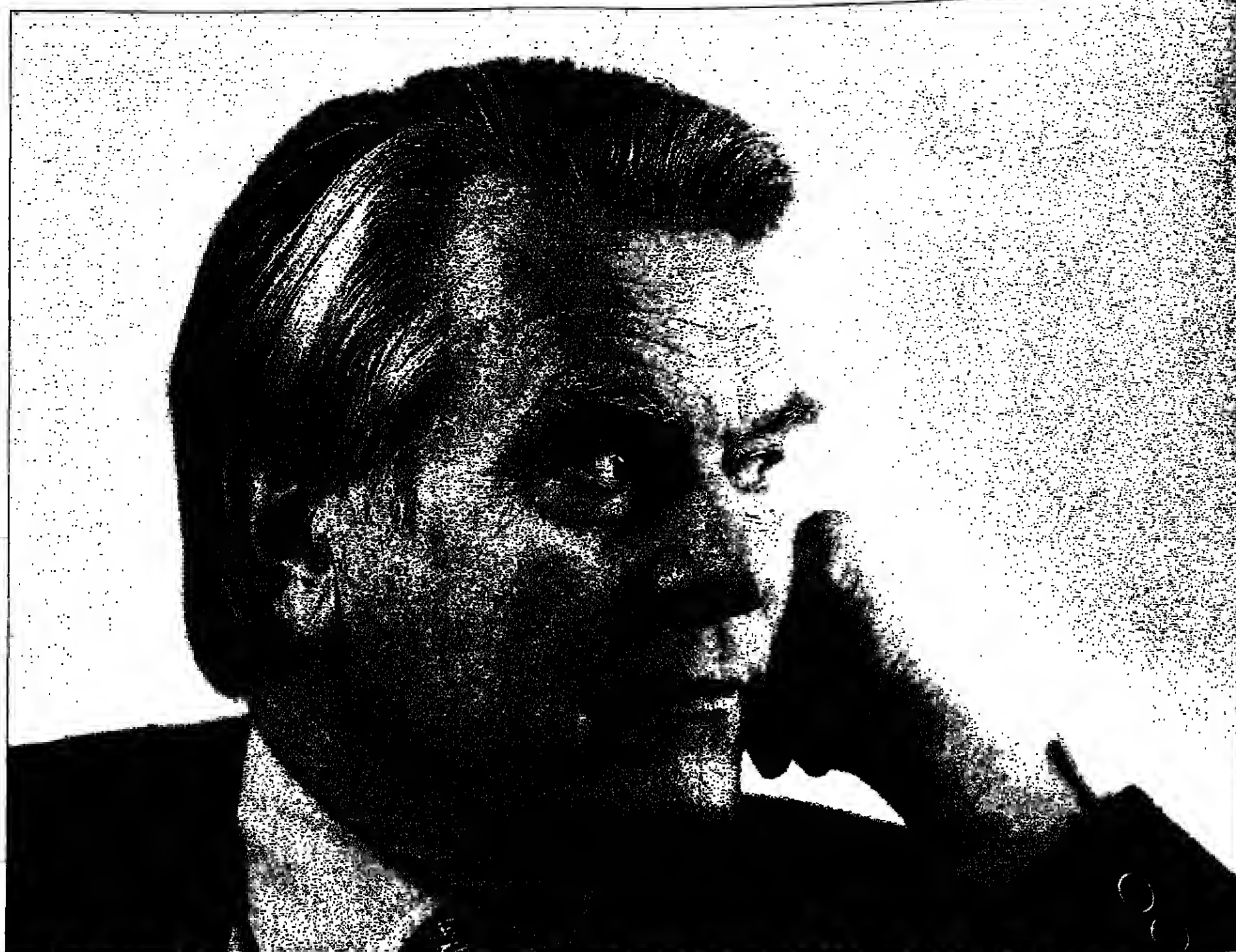
people think EMU [economic and monetary union] is part of a downward escalator to a United States of Europe, they will be very against it."

"But I don't think we should be hostile [to EMU]. I have no time for those who will rejoice every time it runs into trouble."

However, he did rejoice a little at two recent events: the Franco-German demands for the single currency to be accompanied by a common EU tax policy, and the lack of EU support for the British and United States bombing of Iraq. For Lord Owen, the latter was

a "classic example" of how majority voting in EU foreign policy would never work, since Britain under such a system could not have acted alone. "Tony Blair tried to persuade the other EU countries to support him, but they failed him," he said.

Lord Owen believes that his latest - and possibly last - crusade will triumph, but conceded: "At the end of the day, if the younger generation decide they want the single currency we will have to go for it the whole hog. But I will regret it to my dying day."



Lord Owen, renamed 'Dr Death' by his Labour critics, sees New Labour as a vindication of the breakaway SDP, which he led from 1983 to 1987

John Voas

Ministers 'putting arms before human rights'

BY FRAN ABRAMS
Westminster Correspondent

MINISTERS HAVE soft-pedalled on human rights abuses abroad to avoid losing lucrative trade deals including arms sales, a House of Commons committee suggested yesterday.

Members of the Foreign Affairs Select Committee were critical of Britain's attitude to Indonesia, where the UK has struck important arms deals, and China, to which Tony Blair led a trade mission this year. They said that while some departments, such as the Foreign Office, were clearly worried about human rights, those responsible for trade seemed less concerned. Launching their report on foreign policy and human rights, MPs from all parties said Britain's attitude towards the former Suharto regime in Indonesia had been softened by its desire to sell arms.

The committee's chairman, Donald Anderson, criticised a



The criticised picture of Cook and Suharto. Popperfoto

picture in the Government's annual human rights report of Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, shaking hands with President Suharto, who resigned amid mounting unrest in May. "The temptation is to be strong on weak countries and weak on strong countries. Indonesia was clearly a country where there were substantial projects including arms purchases in prospect," he said.

Diane Abbott, the Labour MP for Hackney North and Stoke Newington, described the photograph as "a standing indictment of the Foreign Secretary". She added: "Some of us do discern a difference between what we see as the genuine interest of the Foreign Secretary in human rights and the long-standing interest in arms sales of the Ministry of Defence, the Department of

Trade and Industry and even possibly 10 Downing Street. Britain's "constructive engagement" in Indonesia contrasted with its tough stance against the Abacha regime in Nigeria, also now defunct, the committee said.

The report said some progress had been made and committee members added that their conclusions, made 18 months into the new administration, must be tentative. However, there was certainly inconsistency in the way the "ethical" dimension to foreign policy operated. The report criticised the Government for not taking a stronger line against China, saying the Chinese government had claimed a "propaganda victory" after the EU failed to censure it.

A Foreign Office spokesman welcomed the positive aspects of the report: "It does praise his [Robin Cook's] work on the EU arms code, the International Criminal Court and the human rights annual report."

Mandelson jobs promise 'false'

THE UNEMPLOYED are being misled by Peter Mandelson with the promise of thousands of jobs that do not exist, the Opposition said yesterday.

The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry had "fiddled" the figures because only 108 out of 2,040 "new" jobs quoted by him were actual vacancies.

The Government denied the allegations and in turn accused the shadow Trade and Industry spokesman, John Redwood, of indulging in "silly scare stories".

The controversy centred on Mr Mandelson's recent claim that the North-east could weather large-scale redundancies caused by the closure of Siemens and Fujitsu plants because more jobs were being created by other firms. He said

BY PAUL WAUGH
Political Correspondent

the region had generated more vacancies than redundancies and added: "I want people to go out and talk up the region. I don't want people talking us down."

The Department of Trade and Industry said 2,000 posts had been created by a Barclays call centre in Sunderland, and Alloy Processing in Newton Aycliffe was offering 40 jobs.

But Barclays will have 100 jobs by the end of this month, while the steel company will have eight. Mr Redwood said Mr Mandelson had been "fiddling the figures to give the impression that more jobs have been created than lost."

Battle hots up on Welsh Assembly

BY PAUL WAUGH
Political Correspondent

THE BATTLE for the Labour leadership of the Welsh Assembly took a new twist yesterday when the Welsh Secretary, Alun Michael, was accused of running scared of the voters.

He was attacked by supporters of his rival, Rhodri Morgan, after saying he would not contest one of the 40 constituency seats for the assembly in May. Instead, he wanted to be one of 20 assembly members elected from regional "top-up" party lists by proportional representation. He will stand in Mid and West Wales, made up of eight individual constituencies, none of which has backed him in the leadership contest.

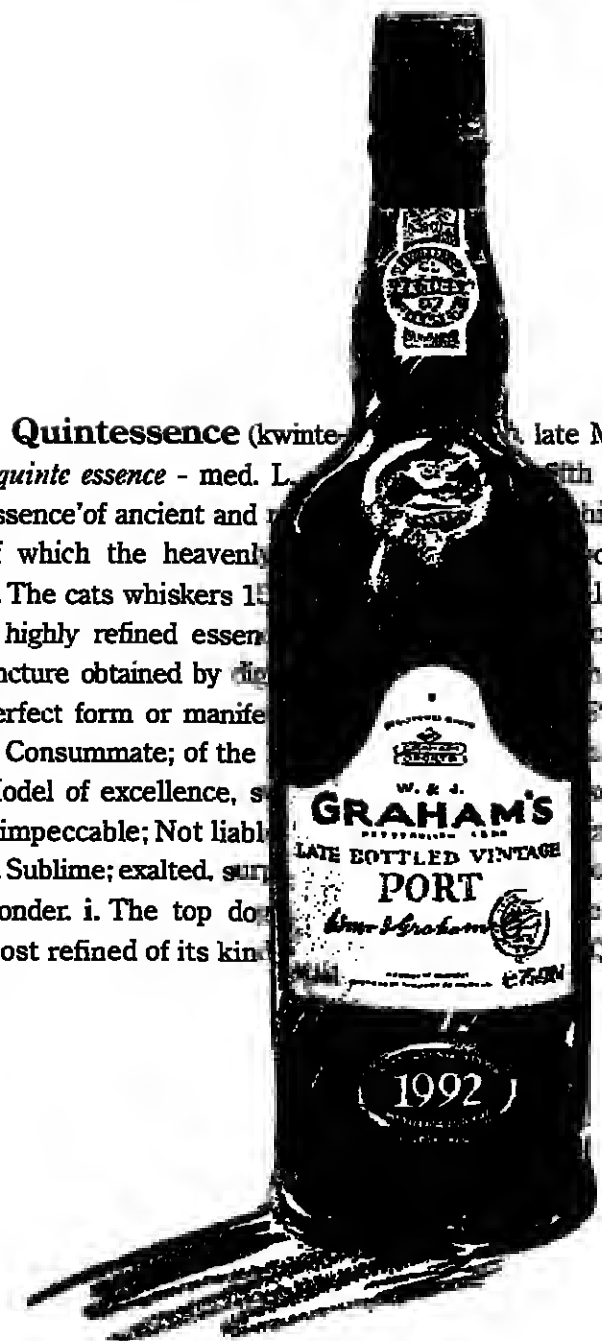
He said he had been invited for selection in half a dozen safe

seats that each has a candidate but he did not want to be seen pushing aside local party members. "Because assembly members elected through the list will carry out duties in each of the eight constituencies in the area, I will, as an additional member, be able to focus on its strategic needs."

The result of the leadership ballot is due in February.

Mr Morgan, the Cardiff West MP, has been selected to fight the Cardiff West seat for the assembly. His supporters said Mr Michael's decision proved his unpopularity with local Labour members. "He's running scared from the voters."

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Quintessence (kwint-ess-ence) is the essence of a thing, the substance of which the heavenly bodies were composed. b. The cats whiskers 15. A highly refined essence. c. The purest or most perfect form or manifestation of a thing. d. The bees knees. e. Consummate; of the Model of excellence, f. impeccable; Not liable to error. h. Sublime; exalted, wonderful. i. The top dog. most refined of its kind.

السنة من العمل



Lucille McLauchlan, tight-lipped, leaving Dundee Sheriff Court yesterday

Saudi nurse stole cash from patient

BY ANDY DENHOLM

A NURSE jailed in Saudi Arabia over the murder of a colleague was found guilty yesterday of stealing from a patient in Britain.

Lucille McLauchlan, 33, took money from an elderly patient while at King's Cross Hospital, Dundee, in 1996, and then forged references to get work. She was also convicted of reset - handling a stolen bank card.

The court appearance followed the nurse's release from Saudi Arabia earlier this year. She spent 17 months in jail after being convicted of being an accessory to murder.

Sheriff Alastair Stewart, at Dundee Sheriff Court, deferred sentence until 18 January for reports.

Although she was found guilty of using the bank card, McLauchlan was acquitted of stealing it while working at the Dundee hospital. And while found guilty of using forged references, she was cleared of allegedly using them to obtain a job in Saudi Arabia.

The court heard that one of the most crucial pieces of evidence that helped to convict her of the theft of £300 was a two-and-a-half-minute sequence from a bank security video, which showed McLauchlan next to a cash machine in Dundee.

McLauchlan was unable to say what she had been doing there as she did not have an account at the branch.

Sheriff Stewart described her actions and the length of time spent at the machine as "highly suspicious".

"It is theoretically possible that she may have been doing something else such as making a balance inquiry but I suggest that is the sort of fanciful speculation that juries are directed to avoid."

The sheriff described McLauchlan's use of forged references, which she gave to the Speedwell Nurses Recruitment Agency, Dundee, as "a clearly thought out and planned pattern of deceit with a view to obtaining employment abroad". He said they contained "untrue statements" and "complete lies".

McLauchlan - who appeared under her married name of Ferrie - sat impassively in the dock as the verdicts were read out and refused to speak to reporters as she left the court.

One of the references purporting to come from Loraine Deuchars of King's Cross Hospital spoke of McLauchlan's "good working relationship with staff" and described her as "very popular" with patients and relatives. But Miss Deuchars told the court she had not seen the letter.

McLauchlan was suspended by King's Cross Hospital in April 1996 after a police investigation into the missing bank card and she was sacked after a hearing on 14 May.

By that time she had approached the agency, asking about work abroad. Soon after she got a job at the King Fahd military hospital in Saudi Arabia. While there, McLauchlan was jailed with Deborah Parry, another nurse, after the death of Yvonne Gifford, an Australian, in 1996.

A Saudi court convicted her of being an accessory to murder and sentenced her to eight years in prison and 500 lashes. She flew home after her sentence was commuted in May.

Seasonal ways to steal cars

MOTING ORGANISATIONS have identified three new types of car thief who have sprung up in response to the latest attempts by manufacturers and police forces to improve vehicle security.

These new techniques - known as "frosting", "hooking" and "gifting" - take advantage of drivers' complacency that their cars are theft-proof. Thieves are selecting high-value luxury saloon cars such as Jaguars and Mercedes.

■ **Frosting**, which originated in the West Midlands, preys on motorists who leave their engines running while the car defrosts and nip into the house for a cup of tea. The thief sneaks into the car and drives off with an early Christmas present.

■ **Hooking** is when car thieves push long metal hooks through letterboxes to prise away keys left hanging near the front door.

■ **Gifting** is a seasonal crime. Many Christmas shoppers return to their cars halfway through the trip and leave parcels visible on the back-seat or on the hatchback shelf.

The RAC said these crimes had emerged since local councils and business started making greater use of close circuit television (CCTV) in high crime areas. Last year thieves preyed on garage forecourts as many drivers left their keys in the car while paying for petrol, but this had been made too difficult by CCTV.

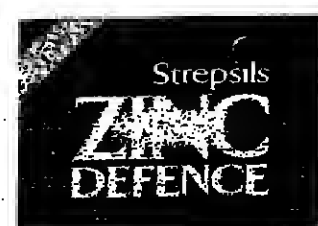
Edmund King, RAC director of campaigns, said: "Security improvements, alarms and improved immobilisers have made it much harder for the car thief to break into and steal luxury cars."

He said simple measures, such as concealing car keys and not leaving car doors open or their contents visible, would prevent the problem.

ANWAR IBRAHIM
In solitary confinement, the sound of silence is quite deafening
IN THE TUESDAY REVIEW PAGE 4



A hectic lifestyle and not always sticking to a sensible diet could make you more susceptible to nasty cold viruses. New Zinc Defence's advanced formula helps support your immune system's resistance to infection.



HELPING YOU FIGHT OFF COLDS.

Have you bought a Pay as you Talk phone? Well, here are some Christmas wishes from Vodafone

Due to the incredible popularity of Pay as you Talk, our Helpline service has been very busy and there may be a delay in answering your call. Our busiest days will probably be Christmas Day and Boxing Day, and if you can't get through we would like to apologise for any inconvenience that this may cause. Don't forget our Helpline is open 24hrs a day.

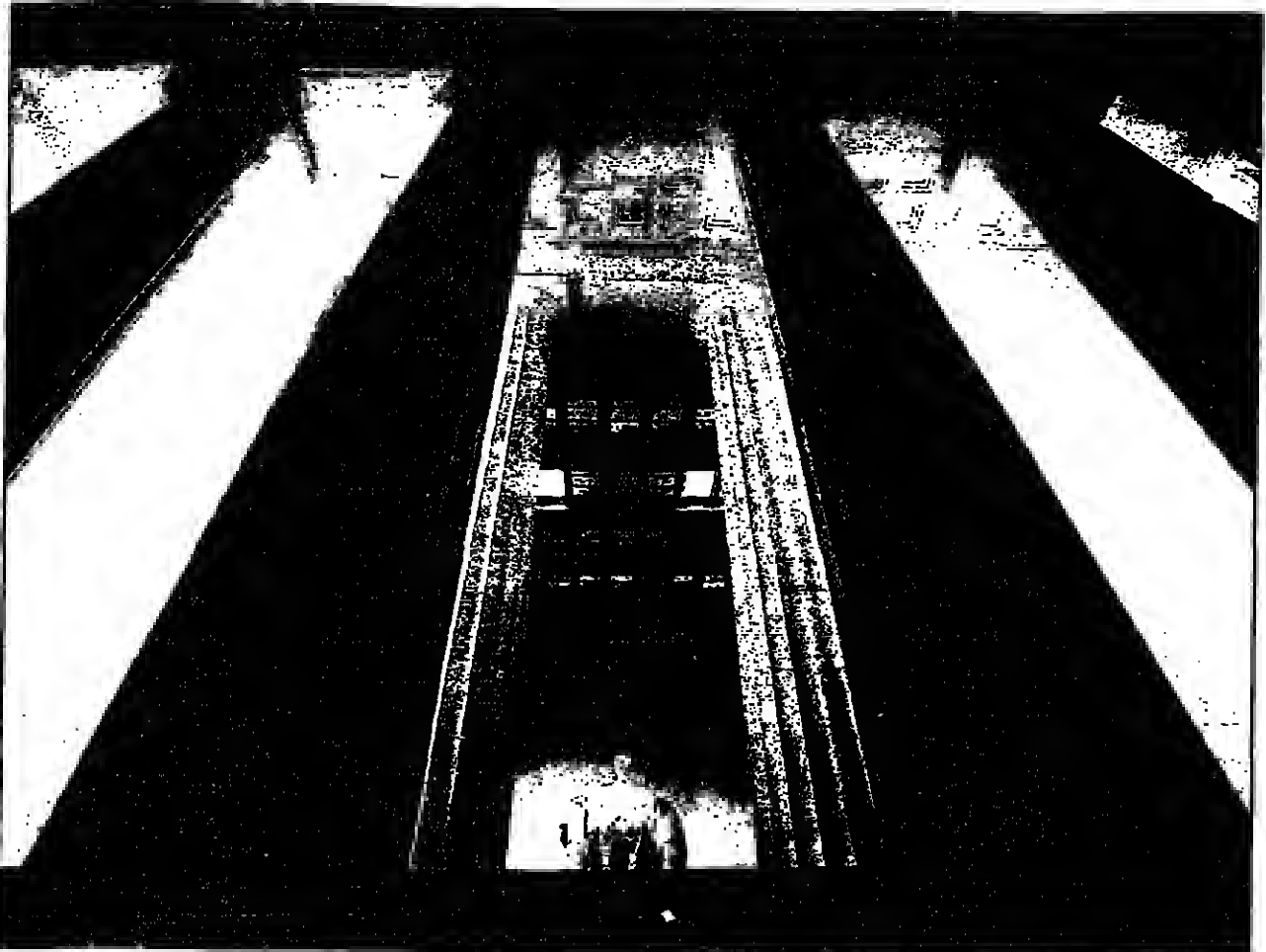
To help us help you further, if you have bought a digital handset, you no longer need to phone the Creditline to check your Calling or Service Credit. Simply dial *#1345# followed by the SEND key or press the Hotkey. After a few moments your balance will be displayed on the screen of your phone. This service is free, of course.

We would also like to encourage you to register your details by post* by filling in the card in the box. To give you more time, we have extended the return date for registrations for our Pay as you Talk Christmas promotion. So if you have used your phone by December 31st 1998 and we receive your card by January 14th 1999, you will still qualify for the normal £2.50 worth of Calling Credit and the £10 special Christmas offer! Our final wish is that you enjoy Christmas and using your phone.



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The Lincoln Memorial waits in the wings as Washington waits for the Senate to fulfil its duty **Brian Harris**

Uncharted waters ahead for Clinton

THE DISPUTATIOUS and bitterly partisan House of Representatives having fulfilled its constitutional duty, America's other and very different legislative chamber began to prepare the ground yesterday for its own decisive role in the impeachment of Bill Clinton.

If the House at great moments of crisis tends to resemble a student debating hall, the Senate is very much the upper common room: clubby, cloaked in traditions and above all imbued with a sense of its own self-importance.

"The greatest deliberative body on earth," it was once fond of calling itself, until an all-too-visible lack of deliberative skills turned the phrase into a parody. But the illusion persists. All 100 senators look into the mirror each morning and see a future president, it is said. Although nobody from its ranks has been elected to

the Presidency since John F. Kennedy in 1960, the Senate usually provides the bulk of putative candidates for the nomination.

It is a place of arcane and seemingly immutable rules, yet of procedures that can be subtly modified to suit the hour. Unlike the electronic voting system in the 435-member House, Senate votes are still conducted by roll call: "Mr Kennedy... Aye, Mr Kerry... Aye" (or "No" as the case may be). Such is the plodding pace of democracy in the upper chamber.

The clerk will go through the list several times. One by one figures laden with appropriate gravitas move to the bar to record their vote. Afterwards they stand by in small buddies, as at a discreet cocktail party.

Fireworks, not surprisingly, are rare. To be sure, great occasions always possess their drama, and so it will be in the impeachment trial. But the very arrangement of the furniture seems designed to extract the passion from the place. The senator has no bench but a desk-cum-lectern.

C-SPAN, the television channel that carries Senate proceedings in their entirety, must also keep its camera fixed on the speaker. Panning shots are barred - for the simple reason viewers would otherwise see that this temple of democracy is usually empty.

But if America's political temperature needs lowering, the Senate is the perfect forum. Its members face election only every six years, compared with every other year for Representatives. Even the fiercest recruit from the House, after a few attempts to liven things up,

soon bears the tut-tutting of his peers and acquires the proper decorum.

The Senate, moreover, could never pass anything as contentious as an article of impeachment as narrowly as the 211 to 212 vote that "indicted" Mr Clinton for obstruction of justice. It needs a 60 per cent majority, or 60 votes, even to end a filibuster. And no less than two-thirds, or 67 votes, are needed for an impeachment conviction, or to overturn a presidential veto.

On the face of things, therefore, Mr Clinton looks safe; even if all 55 Republicans voted unanimously, 12 Democrats would have to defect if he is to be driven from office. At any point they could stop the trial.

Senators, however, are less inclined to follow the party whip, and this is a process through uncharted waters.

DC reverses decline to win back home rule

THERE WAS much seasonal rejoicing in Washington yesterday at the announcement that after three years of outside management, the capital of the United States, otherwise known as the District of Columbia, would be permitted to govern itself again. From 2 January, when the new mayor, Anthony Williams, takes office, the elected council will take back responsibility for running the city.

In a symbolic gesture, the announcement of a return to what is known locally as "home rule" came not from the federally appointed Control Board, which is currently responsible for running the city, but from the office of the mayor.

BY MARY DEJEVSKY in Washington

energetic Texan, took over as city manager last year, but answered to the Control Board. She will now answer to the mayor. The DC police, which has one of the lowest clear-up rates for murders in the whole of the United States, will be under the direct authority of the mayor.

The Control Board will remain in place for the time being, but will shift its attention from actual management of services to overseeing the city's finances. According to Alice Rivlin, its chairman, the board's new role will be to "oversee Williams and try to keep him on track".

Mr Williams said that he believed the changes would result in a cleaner, safer city within six months.

The decision to return the bulk of power to the mayor is a direct response to two developments: the reluctant acceptance of the present mayor, the controversial Marion Barry, that he should seek "friendly" advice not to seek re-election, and the voters' choice of Anthony Williams to succeed him. Mr Williams, an adopted child who was brought up in Los Angeles, has been Washington's chief accountant for the past two years and is credited with turning around the city's finances to the point where it will be in the black this year.

The fact that Mr Williams received well over 50 per cent of the vote made him the first mayor of this racially divided city to have a mandate from black and white voters alike. Mr Barry, who was re-elected in 1994 after resigning because of a drugs conviction two years before, had exacerbated the city's division, attracting - until they too started to find the mismanagement intolerable - the devoted support of the District's black majority and the fierce resentment of whites.

To the general amazement of residents, the improvement in the city's finances has been accompanied by belated manifestations of the economic boom that has benefited many other parts of the United States. The city centre is currently the scene of frenetic building and refurbishment, some, but by no means all, spawned by the MCI sports stadium, which opened a year ago.

Decaying sites, which were used as car parks, are being vacated by the day as builders move in with earth-moving equipment and huge cranes to start the construction of office blocks and hotels.

The boom is even helping suburbs inside the District border, where property values, which had been falling for almost a decade, are increasing, empty areas of land are sprouting new developments and smaller, older houses are being razed by their owners to make way for new homes.



Anthony Williams: Has put city back in the black



Marion Barry: Advised not to seek re-election

Elect, which is preparing the transition.

The city council was stripped of most of its financial authority in 1985 when it was on the verge of bankruptcy. In August 1997 it lost most of its administrative authority as well, after management and city services had continued to decline.

From next month, most city agencies, including those responsible for public works, social services, rubbish collection and health clinics for the poor, will report to the mayor, via the city manager, Camille Barnett.

Ms Barnett, a formidably

Last Christmas thousands of people wished they were dead.



"So here it is merry Christmas everybody's having fun, look to the future now, it's only just begun..."

Everytime you hear the immortal words of Stale's Noddy Holder, you know Christmas has officially started. Trouble is, now it seems to start in about June.

Not everybody will have a merry Christmas, not everybody's having fun, and not everybody's looking to the future.

Let's face it, even the first Christmas had its ups and downs. A family with no home, a new baby, and then a bunch of strangers turning up in the middle of the night.

We have so many expectations of what Christmas should be like, that feelings of grief, unhappiness or loneliness are much more acute and real.

Christmas is fundamentally about family - but what if you don't have one, or this year someone in your family died. Only those who have experienced this know the pain of pretending your way through the festive season, the agony of not having to buy a present, not send a card, or not set a dinner place.

For parents who have lost young children the void can be unbearable. Queuing for hours and hours amongst manic mothers to get your hands on this year's must-have toy is some people's sweetest dream.

Christmas is also the time to be with loved ones. Anyone who has been through a divorce knows the wrench

of having to share not just presents, but their kids at Christmas, and the nauseating pain of seeing them enjoying it with a new stepmother or father.

Children with parents who have split up know the emotional tightrope to be walked so as not to favour either parent, and the gut wrenching feeling in your stomach of eating two Christmas dinners.

For some, going home is a nightmare any time of the year. "Going home for Christmas" can be devastating - returning to a former life you thought you'd escaped. Now all your failings are laid open for inspection by people who still want to control your lives through a cocoon of mince pies and marzipan.

Others would love to go home to a family, but there's no one to go home to, and no one to buy presents for.

But at least Christmas won't bankrupt them you might say. The pressure on parents to satisfy the desires of their wide eyed munchkins, or not to disappoint their designer savvy teenagers is enormous.

How do you tell children Santa can't get them an interactive dinosaur because Daddy's firm is downsizing for the recession?

How does Mummy tell them she can't face another year? And if you were to tell someone how you felt, surely

you'd be spoiling their Christmas, wouldn't you? So, you put on the silly hat, stretch your face into a smile, and if anyone does ask, you say you're "fine" - but they won't ask, because it's "Christmas" time! Anyway look around you, they'd say "lovely family, lovely friends, new carpets, new hi-fi" with Noddy Holder still growling out the cheer.

"...everybody's having fun..."

The Samaritans know from experience "the season to be jolly" can be the most miserable time of year for some, yet you are surrounded by people you least want to let down. Those you can confide in may be away or unavailable, so it becomes impossible to express your emotions.

They also know that just talking to someone who will really listen, can actually mean the difference between someone choosing life instead of suicide.

The Samaritans will not judge or preach, or tell you what to do, but neither will they play down the seriousness of your situation, and it almost goes without saying that anything you say is in absolute confidence.

Everyone knows that the pressure at Christmas to have a good time is relentless, but throughout Christmas at any time, day or night, there are people there.

So whatever you're going through this Christmas, even if you're only ruining the turkey, we'll go through it with you.

Whatever you're going through this Christmas we'll go through it with you. The Samaritans. 0345 90 90 90.

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It's not too late to send presents around the world. Let the Internet work for you. For free!

Peking demonstrations for 12

In his own campaigning speech Mr Barak accused Mr Netanyahu of surrendering to Jewish extremists and said the Prime Minister had failed also in his policies on education, health and employment.

A rescue team working yesterday at the site of a plane crash that claimed the life of the New Zealand adventurer Phil Stubbs on Karekare Beach, near Auckland. Mr Stubbs, who conquered the Atlantic in a rowing boat last year, died when his light aircraft nose-dived into the beach on Sunday evening. *Brett Phibbs/Reuters*

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A MAN who underwent a sex change has perplexed a court in Iran, where sons inherit twice as much as daughters. The inheritance court hearing claims by the man, named only as Hussein, 19, delayed a ruling.

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DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
ATTENTION: THE
SECURITY INFORMATION
SECTION

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begins a marathon
viewing that takes us
from the Christmas to
the Roald Dahl, or
the Goshawk Christmas.
In January, the night of
the January, which is "Old
New Year" according to the pre-

...ents around the world for Xmas, for the Christmas Day, for the Christmas for everyone. The services in over 20 countries.

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هكذا من الاصل

Peking jails democrat for 13 years

PRACONIAN JAIL terms were imposed yesterday on two Chinese dissidents, 11 weeks to the day since China signed the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

After a year in which visiting foreign leaders have spoken approvingly of China's tentative legal reforms, it took three-and-a-half hours for Xu Wenli, 5, a veteran activist, to be found guilty of subversion and sentenced to 13 years in prison.

Fellow dissident Wang Youcai, 2, was jailed for 11 years on the same charges.

Mr Xu's wife, He Xintong, as the only family member or friend allowed at the closed-door trial in Peking.

She said Mr Xu responded to questions from his court-appointed lawyer but refused to answer questions from the judge, at one point saying: "This is a political persecution. Mr Xu and Mr Wang had tried to set up a China Democracy Party."

After a judge said Mr Xu's refusal to answer questions was contempt, he retorted: "I have the right to keep silent."

BY TERESA POOLE
in Peking

The official verdict said that he had "secretly planned" to set up cells for the party and "sought and accepted financial assistance from foreign hostile organisations". No details of the supposed evidence were reported. Mr Wang's trial was held on Thursday in Hangzhou city.

The severity of the sentences shocked Western diplomats, who have been saying dialogue with China over rights had proved a force for change.

It is particularly awkward for Tony Blair, whose visit to Peking in October coincided with Mr Xu being detained by police and held for six hours for questioning.

In Mr Blair's keynote speech in Peking he spoke of Britain's human-rights dialogue with China.

"We have been able to engage the Chinese authorities and, I hope, to influence them," he said on 7 October.

The Prime Minister said that this "process of dialogue"

meant such incidents as the detention of a dissident could be discussed "with the Chinese in a spirit of co-operation".

Yesterday the Foreign Office minister Derek Fatchett said he was shocked at the speed with which Mr Xu was tried and the severity of his sentence. Mr Fatchett was due last night to dine with Ma Zhengang, China's ambassador to Britain, a meeting at which he will have been able to test the "spirit of co-operation" for discussion of rights issues. The US embassy in Peking described the jail terms as "deplorable".

The trials are embarrassing many Western governments, which welcomed China's recent reforms to its rules on criminal procedure and have backed projects to train Chinese lawyers, judges and court officials in the hope of improving the country's flawed legal system. To coincide with Mr Blair's visit, a British Law Week was held in Peking, including the staging of a mock trial, introduced by the Prime Minister's wife, Cherie Booth QC.

When it comes to punishing



Activists with pictures of Mr Xu demonstrating outside government offices in Hong Kong yesterday

dissidents, however, China does not meet even the limited rights provided to defendants under its own new rules.

Mr Xu, who has already spent 12 years in jail for pro-democracy activities, was told only on Friday that he was due in court yesterday.

He ought to have received 10 days' notice. His court-appointed lawyer thus had only the weekend to prepare a defence.

Mr Wang's chosen lawyer was detained and others frightened off, so he had to defend himself. The official Xinhua

news agency said yesterday that both men had had "open trials conducted 'according to law'".

Qin Yongmin, a China Democracy Party colleague whose trial for subversion was also on Thursday, had three days' notice of his court ap-

pearance, and could not find a lawyer in time. His sentence is expected soon.

Mr Xu will not appeal against his sentence, his wife said. "To appeal, he said, would be admitting a crime. And under no circumstance is he willing to admit to this crime."

Debtor has his own feet cut off

A GROCER laden with debt hired an acquaintance to cut off his feet in a 2bn won (€1m) insurance swindle, said police in South Korea.

Chung Kyu-chil, 51, told police in Seoul that his feet were missing when he woke in his shop on 11 December after a heavy drinking bout the night before. He said a customer found him bleeding heavily and took him to hospital.

Police at first suspected Mr Chung's creditors, because he had run up €150,000 in stock market and gambling losses.

But police later found Mr Chung had taken out two dozen insurance policies in the past three months that would pay him up to €1m if he became accidentally disabled.

Mr Chung then admitted he had hired Kim Kui-yong, 41, a taxi driver, to sever his feet at the ankle, promising to pay him €25,000 if the scam was successful. The taxi driver told police that he chopped off Mr Chung's feet with an axe and dumped them into the Han River.

Police arrested the taxi driver on assault charges but said they have no legal grounds to arrest Mr Chung because he has not tried to collect the insurance money. (AP)

Ring in the new, without those sprouts

STREET LIFE
SAMOTECHNY LANE, MOSCOW

"DE the halls with boughs of holly-la-la-la-la-la-la-la-la-la" have just been to the Christmas tree market here in Samotechny Lane and come home with a fine fic.

"The season to be jolly..."

Freezer is packed with sprigs from the supermarket everybody hates them, I know they are part of the sad tradition.

"Jingle bells, jingle bells..."

the Silver Rain radio station's Solov'yov, who spends time in the United States, is teaching his Russian Christmas carols.

a Western Christian, I do not so lonely in Moscow this Christmas, for some Russians arguing to celebrate what they call "Chreestmas", as well as their own holiday in early July.

communist times, the Soviet Union used to be the perfect place for Scrooges to seek as from merriment. December 25 was just another ordinary working day. Catholics arrested in the occupied Baltic states had to clock in at their jobs and could only celebrate Christmas in secret at home in the evening.

Moscow, the fir tree marked pointedly on the eve of New Year when Western Christmas was over. I remember a year making do with a bit of culinary bay leaves as a twist of tinsel instead of aspen tree. And you could just sprouts for love nor irey.

ow, our Christmas traditions are becoming popular, at least with the Western middle classes. "We Asians like parties," said a Chinese accountant, who with his wife, Lena, for a Christmas meal at Samotechny Lane. "If we can swallow the contradiction of celebrating the October Revolution and Boris Yeltsin's Constitution Day, then it's not cult for us to add another Christmas to our repertoire. I wish, I won't have any more those Brussels sprouts but we mince pies look nice."

and so begins a marathon of feasting that takes us to Western Christmas to Year to Rozhdestvo, or Russian Orthodox Christmas, on 6-7 January to the night of 4 January, which is "Old Year" according to the pre-

revolutionary calendar. For most Russians, the new year holiday that they learnt to love in Soviet childhood retains the strongest magic.

"We had never heard of Christmas then," said Sasha. "Even our own Rozhdestvo was a low-key affair because the communists did not encourage the Orthodox church. But we always celebrated New Year with a bang. We had champagne and salad and watched *With Light Steam and Blue Flame*. If we were lucky, we would see some Western pop groups like Boney M."

Not much has changed. *Blue Flame*, a variety show best compared to the BBC's old *Christmas Night With the Stars*, has yielded to cooler pop music.

But year after year, when the champagne corks had popped, Russians settled down to enjoy *With Light Steam*, their favourite comedy about a man who gets drunk at the banya (steam bath) and ends up by mistake spending New Year in someone else's flat.

It is still too early to slump in front of the TV, however. This week Russians are doing their new year shopping. Housewives are stocking up on beetroot and walnuts, salmon, tinned peas and mayonnaise for their traditional salad. There was a panic some weeks ago when the authorities banned the sale of alcohol on street markets as too many people had been poisoned by polluted vodka. But state-run shops appear to be coping with the demand for champagne, at least in Moscow.

On Sunday, Muscovites were also wandering among the kiosks in the city centre, looking for presents. It will be a thin new year because of the economic crisis. "Madness," said a woman when she saw the prices of nothing more extravagant than bars of white chocolate. "Those of a nervous disposition are advised not to window shop," joked the old man behind her.

New year here is still less commercial than Christmas in the West. Poor Russians usually give or receive only one present. There is a simplicity about it that we have lost.

Popular gifts this year are little glass rabbits, selling for 15 roubles (50p), for 1999 will be the Chinese Year of the Rabbit. Alongside Western traditions, Russians have also adopted the Chinese and are hoping that the peaceable rabbit will bring them better luck than the outgoing tiger that proved so harsh to them in 1998.

STUCK FOR LAST MINUTE CHRISTMAS INSPIRATION?

COMET

BEST BUYS

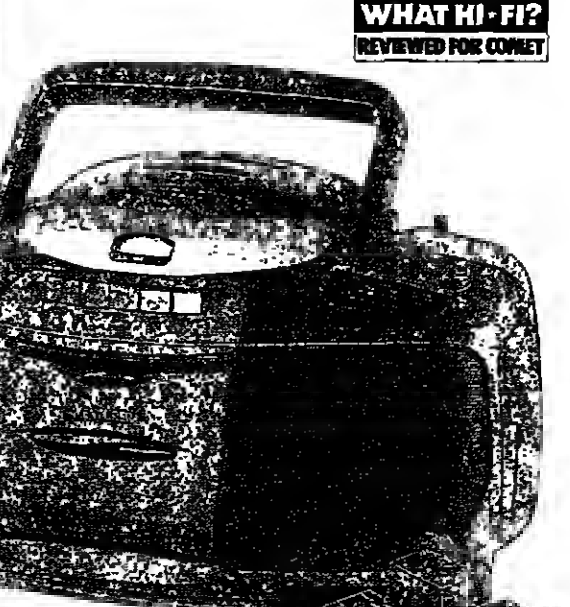
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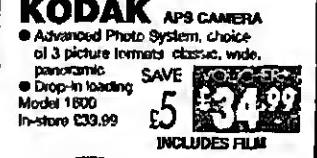


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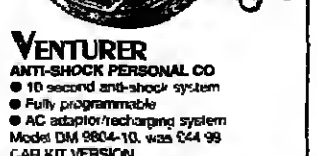
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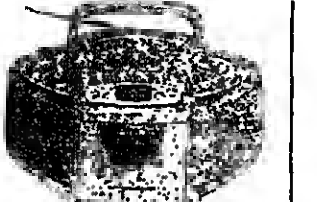
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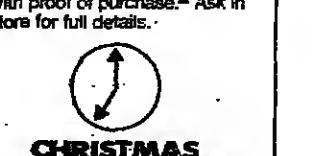
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BUSINESS

UK needs to make further rate cuts, says gloomy IMF

BY LEA PATERSON
AND CLIFFORD GERMAN

THE INTERNATIONAL Monetary Fund (IMF) yesterday called for further reductions in UK interest rates and is now more pessimistic about the outlook for the UK economy than the Treasury.

Releasing a revised version of its "World Economic Outlook" (WEO), the IMF cut its forecast for UK economic growth to 0.9 per cent for 1999, compared to its previous forecast of 1.2 per cent growth and the official 1 to 1.5 per cent Treasury growth forecast.

"Monetary policy is still relatively tight and there is significant scope for rates to be cut further as growth weakens and inflation concerns recede," said the fund's report.

The IMF - which has also cut its growth forecasts for every other major industrialised nation - said that although the risks to growth remained on the downside, next year's slowdown in the UK is likely to be short-lived.

In its annual assessment of the state of the UK economy, released yesterday alongside the revised WEO, the IMF said that private sector fundamen-

| ECONOMIC GROWTH IN 1999 | | |
|-------------------------|--------------|-------------------|
| Area/Country | New forecast | Previous forecast |
| World | 2.2 | 2.5 |
| G7 | 1.5 | 1.9 |
| United States | 1.8 | 2.0 |
| Japan | -0.5 | 0.5 |
| Germany | 2.0 | 2.5 |
| France | 2.6 | 2.8 |
| Britain | 0.9 | 1.2 |
| Italy | 1.9 | 2.5 |
| Canada | 2.2 | 2.5 |
| Asia | 4.3 | 3.5 |

als remained strong and that the newly independent Bank of England was well placed to react to weakening demand.

Although the series of recent cuts in interest rates in the US, Europe and Asia have lessened the risks for the world economy, the recent market turmoil would hurt growth almost everywhere next year, according to the revised WEO.

The global economy will grow by just 2.2 per cent in 1999, down from the 2.5 per cent forecast in early October. Japan will experience another year of contraction in 1999, while growth in the US - currently enjoying the longest period of peace-time expansion

on record - will be just 1.8 per cent.

The Japanese economy, trade protectionism in the developing world, exchange rate volatility and a surge in the US stock market are among the key risks to world growth, the IMF said.

Despite the sharp slowdown predicted for the US economy, the IMF argued that the Federal Reserve should hold fire on US interest rates at its meeting today.

Speaking at a press conference in Washington, Flemming Larsen, deputy director of the IMF's research department, said: "We do not think that the kind of slowdown in growth we are projecting for

City's foreign banks lost £2.5bn in turmoil

FOREIGN BANKS and securities dealers based in London racked up losses totalling £2.5bn following autumn's turmoil in the financial markets, according to official figures released yesterday.

The Russian default, the near-collapse of the Long-Term Capital Management hedge fund and merger-related restructuring costs all contributed to heavy third-quarter losses, the Office for National Statistics said.

The figures revealed that the extreme market volatility had caused heavy losses on interest-rate swaps. Total third-quarter losses on these complex financial instruments totalled £1.5bn.

The bank losses had the perverse effect of substantially improving the UK's current account, which posted a third-quarter surplus of £2.5bn, the second highest on record. This is because losses

made in the UK by foreign-owned banks are repatriated overseas. Analysts speculated that the UK could now post a current account surplus for 1998.

The losses masked underlying trends in the current account, where the goods trade deficit widened but trade in services held up.

The third-quarter trade deficit on goods totalled £5.2bn, the highest for eight years. The trade surplus in services, however, came in at a record £3.4bn.

The underlying strength of the services sector was also evident from yesterday's final revisions to third-quarter GDP. The headline measure was unchanged: the ONS confirmed that GDP grew by 0.4 per cent in the third quarter. However, on the alternative output measure of GDA the services sector grew by 0.8 per cent in the quarter, revised up from 0.6 per cent.

BRIEFING

Oil price hits a 12-year low

THE PRICE of oil hit a 12 year low yesterday after the four days of Anglo-US air attacks in Iraq ended without interruption to oil supplies. In London, benchmark February Brent fell 40 cents to \$9.58 a barrel, after Western industry officials said initial assessments indicated the air strikes had not damaged Iraq's oil export facilities. Meanwhile, in its latest World Economic Outlook, the International Monetary Fund predicted oil prices would stage a partial recovery next year. The IMF has estimated an average oil price in 1999 of \$14.51, compared to \$13.39 in 1998.

SFA clears Thomson Travel



THE Securities and Futures Authority yesterday said it would not take disciplinary action against any party involved in the £1.7bn flotation of Thomson Travel. The City watchdog following the May listing of the tour operator led by the chief executive Paul Brett (pictured). Hundreds of small investors had complained that they could not buy shares because their application form was late.

Dagenham agrees £28.3m bid

FORD motor dealership Dagenham Motors yesterday agreed the proposed £28.3 million, 160p per share takeover offer from a joint venture formed by the Ford Motor company and Jardine International Motor Holdings, Dagenham, which saw its shares fall 16p to 151.5p on the day, also warned that because of "difficult" trading conditions in the fourth quarter of 1998 it now expects profits for the year to be below those of 1997.

Discussions between Ford and Jardine about a joint offer for Dagenham were announced in September and the joint venture was established in November for the purpose of making a bid. Dagenham said that no further announcement will be made about the offer until early in the New Year.

CRH swoops on Ibstock in £326m deal

CRH, the Irish building materials group, yesterday rode to the rescue of Ibstock by launching a £326m takeover swoop which saw it snap up more than 50 per cent of the brick manufacturer's shares in the market.

The audacious deal, orchestrated behind closed doors yesterday and only announced after the stock market had closed, marks a victory for Ibstock's chief executive Philip Mengel over Wienerberger Baustoffindustrie, the Austrian group which had built up a 30 per cent shareholding in Ibstock.

CRH is offering 70p for each Ibstock share, valuing the entire group at £326.4m. However, the deal is a foreign conclusion because the Irish group already controls 50.7 per cent of Ibstock's share capital.

CRH acquired the shares after Cazenove, the stockbroker, yesterday approached Ibstock's leading shareholders and told them an unnamed bidder was ready to offer 70p per share if it could be sure of securing a majority stake. The takeover Panel had approved the move, which is highly unusual, before the approaches were made.

Ibstock has secretly been trying to find a friendly buyer for

BY PETER THAL LARSEN

more than two months after Wienerberger bought its stake from Briery Investments, the New Zealand investment group, at a share price of 66p.

Wienerberger subsequently attempted to secure a seat on Ibstock's board. But Philip Mengel, the company's chief executive, resisted. "We felt that developing a special relationship with one shareholder would not be in the interests of other shareholders," he said.

"They were unwilling to come forward with a full offer and we felt it was untenable that only one shareholder should realise value. So the board focused on realising value for all shareholders."

After contacting several potential companies, Ibstock selected CRH as its preferred bidder. However, the Irish group, which has a legendary aversion to contested takeovers, was reluctant to bid if it could not be sure of securing control.

Don Godson, CRH's chief executive, said: "Ibstock provides CRH with leading positions in clay products in Britain and the US and forms a base for further development in these regions."



Colin McGill, Fox-Pitt Kelton chief executive (left), and Anthony Hamilton, group chairman (right).
Fox-Pitt bows to \$200m Swiss Re offer

ONE HUNDRED members of staff at Fox-Pitt Kelton, the privately-owned investment bank, are set to realise an average of \$2m (£1.2m) each following a \$200m takeover by Swiss Re, the reinsurance group, writes Andrew Verity.

Fox-Pitt yesterday announced a paper offer from Swiss Re to acquire 100 per cent of the company, which specialises in advising on mergers and acquisitions in the financial services industry. The purchase price, put at \$200m but not disclosed by the bank, will be shared between 100 employees who jointly own the company. It employs 200 in total.

Anthony Hamilton, executive chairman of the group, is expected to make more than £8m from the sale of a 5 per cent stake in the group. He said many approaches from rival investment banks had been received, but until the Swiss Re offer all had been knocked back because of fears that staff would defect to rival banks.

The group, founded by Oliver Fox-Pitt and Robin Kelton in 1971, has thrived on offering specialist corporate finance advice to insurers and banks. "A

number of companies want to acquire us, but the idea of the company would be lost and people would have had the same reason to stay," Mr Hamilton said.

"This gives us the financial support we need without destroying the quality of the firm. They don't overlap any of our investment banking activities."

One obstacle to a straight-forward merger with BAE is that BAE is in advanced negotiations on merging with DaimlerChrysler Aerospace (Dasa). Furthermore, BAE is only interested in GEC's defence electronics business, Marconi: a way would have to be found to separate GEC's telecoms interests and its industrial and consumer electronics busi-

nesses, which include fridge and washing-machine Hotpoint.

A three-way merger between BAE, Dasa and GEC remains an option, but this would dilute the German shareholding in the enlarged group below 30 per cent, which is not acceptable to the parent company, DaimlerChrysler.

Outlook, page 15

GEC wants to settle link-up by Christmas

GEC HOPES to make an announcement about a strategic defence tie-up before Christmas, it emerged last night.

Speculation that the defence electronics giant led by Lord Simpson was on the point of unveiling a deal drove GEC shares 5 per cent higher yesterday to 556p - just 2p beneath their high for the year.

The company plans to hold

BY MICHAEL HARRISON

a board meeting in the next three days to decide which option to pursue. It was thought GEC favoured a merger with a US defence contractor possibly Northrop Grumman. But in the past fortnight it has made renewed attempts to clinch a merger with British Aerospace.

To create a UK defence giant, analysts say a tie-up with French defence electronics group Thomson CSF is also still a possibility.

A GEC spokesman refused to comment last night on the timing of any announcement or which of the options was most advanced. "There are still a number of options under consideration," he said.

But it is understood that GEC's preferred course would be to make an announcement this side of Christmas in order to end the frenzy of speculation that has built up since Lord Simpson said earlier this month that it would decide its strategic course "soon".

Given the complexity of the talks and need to resolve issues such as valuation, a deal may have to wait until the New Year.

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Outlook, page 15

AROUND THE WORLD'S MARKETS

LONDON

FOOTSE bounded up 134.6 points to 5,876.5, its best since the end of July. Overseas demand, thought to be linked to the launch of the euro, as well as takeover rumours and a firm New York pushed blue chips higher. Supporting indices were up but lacked Footsie's exuberance.

Asda, the supermarket chain, jumped 6.75p to 159p on reports that it could be the target for Wal-Mart of the US. Furniture chain MFI, another rumoured target, firmed 4.5p to 32p.

Derek Pain, page 19

NEW YORK

THE DOW JONES index stormed through the 9,000 barrier again yesterday to reach 9,074 at midday, a rise of 170 points or almost 2 per cent.

The seasonal "Santa Claus" factor, which traditionally sees shares rise in the last few trading days of the year, easily outweighed any concerns about the impeachment of President Clinton.

"There were no surprises over the weekend and the Iraq situation is over," said one analyst.

TOKYO

THE NIKKEI 225 Index fell by 41.34 points to close at 14,152.95 in lacklustre trading as many foreign investors took early Christmas vacations.

Fears that the Clinton impeachment crisis would distract the US Government from dealing with issues concerning the global economy eased during the day.

Iron and steel shares fell after the US Commerce Department found evidence that eight countries, including Japan, were dumping steel in the US.

HONG KONG

SHARES began the week well on yesterday's 0.25-point cut in interest rates to 9 per cent, the fourth cut since October.

Dealers said lower rates were expected, but the timing was a surprise.

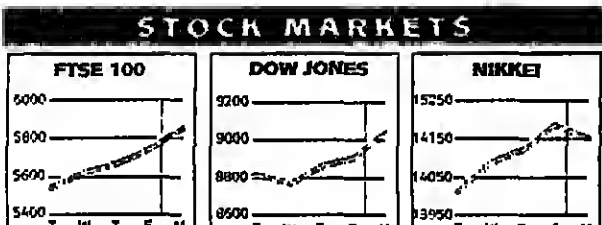
The Hang Seng gained 169.78 points, 1.66 per cent, to close at 10,396.01. The rate cuts have yet to boost the property market, so share reaction was mixed. HSBC Holdings, expected to take over Seoulbank or Korea First Bank, climbed HK\$4.50 to HK\$198.50.

FRANKFURT

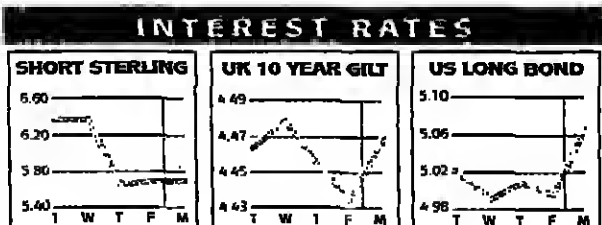
SHARES forged ahead in Germany in line with other European markets, and helped by a strong start to trading on Wall Street.

Dax index closed 151.70 up at 4,780.93. Volkswagen leaped 63 to 1,000DM on reports of a planned sale of its steel trading arm Kloeckner.

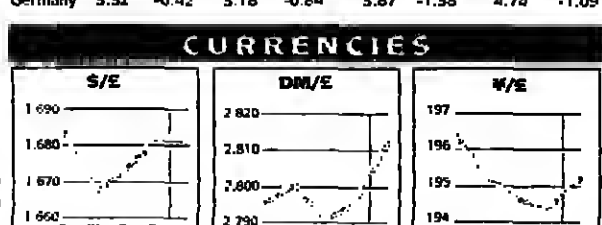
MAI rose 15.30 to 476DM after winning a major contract from the Belgian government, and Deutsche Bank rose 3.80 to 97.80DM. BMW, DaimlerChrysler and VW also gained ground along with most chemicals shares.



| INDICES | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------|----------|--------|------------|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|--------|
| Index | Close | Change | Change (%) | 52 wk high | 52 wk low | Yield (%) | Index | Close | Change |
| FTSE 100 | 5876.50 | 134.60 | 2.34 | 6183.70 | 4599.20 | 3.20 | Dow Jones | 9074.00 | 170.00 |
| FTSE 250 | 4742.90 | 31.70 | 0.67 | 5070.90 | 4247.60 | 4.87 | Nikkei | 14152.95 | -41.34 |
| FTSE 350 | 2760.00 | 56.40 | 2.05 | 2969.10 | 2210.40 | 3.44 | Hang Seng | 10396.01 | 169.78 |
| FTSE All Share | 2659.59 | 52.20 | 2.00 | 2886.52 | 2143.53 | 3.50 | Dax | 4780.93 | 151.70 |
| FTSE SmallCap | 2022.50 | 6.50 | 0.32 | 2293.80 | 1834.40 | 4.15 | | | |
| FTSE Realindex | 1124.60 | 2.80 | 0.25 | 1517.10 | 1046.20 | 0.00 | | | |
| FTSE AIM | 792.80 | -0.60 | -0.08 | 1146.90 | 761.30 | 0.00 | | | |
| FTSE EBLCC 100 | 954.62 | 29.55 | 3.16 | | | | | | |
| Dow Jones | 9074.00 | 170.00 | 1.89 | 9380.20 | 7400.30 | 1.65 | | | |
| Nikkei | 14152.95 | -41.34 | -0.29 | 17352.95 | 12787.90 | 1.04 | | | |
| Hang Seng | 10396.01 | 169.78 | 1.66 | 11926.16 | 6544.79 | 3.00 | | | |
| Dax | 4780.93 | 151.70 | 3.28 | 6217.83 | 3833.71 | 1.79 | | | |



| MONEY MARKET RATES | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------|---------|---------|--------|--------|---------|--------|---------|--------|--------|
| Index | 3 month | 6 month | 1 year | Yr chg | 10 year | Yr chg | 10 year | Yr chg | Yr chg |
| UK | 6.37 | -1.33 | 5.75 | -2.00 | 4.47 | -1.79 | 4.32 | -1.32 | |
| US | 5.25 | -0.66 | 5.00 | -1.00 | 4.65 | - | 5.07 | - | |
| Japan | 0.53 | -0.18 | 0.56 | -0.15 | 1.66 | -0.26 | 2.34 | -0.20 | |
| Germany | 3.32 | -0.42 | 3.18 | -0.84 | 3.87 | -1.38 | 4.74 | -1.09 | |



| POUND | | | | | | | | | |
|---------|--------|--------|--------|----------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| at 5pm | Change | Yr Ago | at 5pm | Change | Yr Ago | at 5pm | Change | Yr Ago | at 5pm |
| Dollar | 1.6810 | +0.04c | 1.6451 | Sterling | 0.5949 | -0.02p | 0.6078 | | |
| 0-Mark | 2.8124 | +1.32p | 2.9743 | 0-Mark | 1.6228 | -0.75p | 1.7987 | | |
| Yen | 195.23 | +0.98 | 215.84 | Yen | 116.08 | +0.4s | 130.58 | | |
| E index | 101.20 | +0.50 | 104.50 | S index | 105.00 | +0.40 | 108.00 | | |

| DOLLAR | | | | | | | | | |
|---------|--------|--------|--------|----------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| at 5pm | Change | Yr Ago | at 5pm | Change | Yr Ago | at 5pm | Change | Yr Ago | at 5pm |
| Dollar | 1.6810 | +0.04c | 1.6451 | Sterling | 0.5949 | -0.02p | 0.6078 | | |
| 0-Mark | 2.8124 | +1.32p | 2.9743 | 0-Mark | 1.6228 | -0.75p | 1.7987 | | |
| Yen | 195.23 | +0.98 | 215.84 | Yen | 116.08 | +0.4s | 130.58 | | |
| E index | 101.20 | +0.50 | 104.50 | S index | 105.00 | +0.40 | 108.00 | | |

| OTHER INDICATORS | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------|--------|-------|--------|------------|--------|------|--------|-------|-------|
| Index | Close | Chg | Yr Ago | Index | Close | Chg | Yr Ago | Index | Close |
| Brent Oil (\$) | 9.22 | -0.21 | 16.91 | GDP | 115.40 | 3.00 | 112.04 | Dec | |
| Gold (\$) | 239.05 | 0.10 | | RPI | 164.40 | 3.00 | 159.61 | Dec | |
| Silver (\$) | 4.95 | 0.01 | 6.09 | Base Rates | 6.25 | 7.25 | | | |

| TOURIST RATES | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------|--------|------------------------|--------|----------------------|--------|----------------------|--------|----------|--------|
| Country | Rate | Country | Rate | Country | Rate | Country | Rate | Country | Rate |
| Australia (\$) | 2.6171 | Mexican (nuevo peso) | 14.94 | Portugal (escudos) | 277.01 | Switzerland (francs) | 2.2077 | USA (\$) | 1.6438 |
| Austria (schillings) | 19.06 | Netherlands (guilders) | 3.0573 | Saudi Arabia (rials) | 6.1326 | Thailand (bahts) | 55.83 | | |
| Belgium (francs) | 56.06 | New Zealand (\$) | 3.0839 | Spain (pesetas) | 230.60 | Turkey (liras) | 500248 | | |
| Canada (\$) | 2.5389 | Norway (krone) | 12.65 | South Africa (rand) | 9.5528 | | | | |
| Cyprus (pounds) | 0.8017 | | | Sweden (krone) | 13.17 | | | | |
| Denmark (krone) | 10.39 | | | Switzerland (francs) | 2.2077 | | | | |
| Finland (marks) | 8.2750 | | | Thailand (bahts) | 55.83 | | | | |
| France (francs) | 9.1971 | | | Turkey (liras) | 500248 | | | | |
| Germany (marks) | 2.7246 | | | USA (\$) | 1.6438 | | | | |
| Greece (drachmas) | 456.82 | | | | | | | | |
| Hong Kong (\$) | 12.64 | | | | | | | | |
| Ireland (pounds) | 1.0918 | | | | | | | | |
| India (rupees) | 64.36 | | | | | | | | |
| Israel (shekels) | 6.5095 | | | | | | | | |
| Italy (lira) | 2701 | | | | | | | | |
| Japan (yen) | 189.42 | | | | | | | | |
| Malaysia (ringgits) | 6.1318 | | | | | | | | |
| Malta (lira) | 0.6094 | | | | | | | | |

GEC prepares to end the suspense

"THE SUSPENSE is killing me... I hope it lasts," says Gene Wilder in that hardy Christmas perennial, *Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory*. Now we have another festive nailbiter on our hands - GEAC and the Giant Defence merger (subtitled: Which Way Will GEC Jump?).

Ever since Lord Simpson promised three weeks ago that he would reach a decision "soon" on who he was going to pair up with in the great defence consolidation game, the expectation has been mounting. Now that GEC has let it be known that it hopes to make an announcement this side of Christmas, the agony of anticipation has become quite exquisite.



OUTLOOK

in the slipstream, climbing by a similar amount. Alas, none of the speculation gets us any nearer an answer. GEC may have tantalised us with the promise of an early denouement which accompanied its interim results. But it also sent up enough chaff to confuse the stealthiest truth-seeking missile. An American merger would make sense because GEC knows the terrain, having already snapped up Tracor for £200m, and - more importantly - because it is trusted by the Pentagon.

of the long-awaited European Aerospace and Defence Company. GEC has tried and failed before to hold hands with its opposite number in France, Thomson CSF, only to fall foul of Gallic chauvinism. But time and politics have moved on. One method of joining forces could be through its French partner Alcatel, which has a 16 per cent holding in Thomson.

But the "dream merger" of GEC and BAE is the one that whets the appetite. There are formidable hurdles to jump - the vexed question of valuation for one, and what to do with the bit of GEC that makes Hotpoint fridges for another. There is another snag, which is that Sir Dick is betrothed to Manfred at Daimler Chrysler Aerospace.

The British government would rather like to engineer a ménage à trois between all three companies. Perhaps we shall not have to wait long to see.

AMP-NPI

THE HEADLINE number looks big, but as NPI policyholders have discovered to their cost over the

years, it is the bits that have been squirrelled away from view that give a truer picture of the state of affairs. AMP of Australia says that NPI's half a million members will benefit to the tune of £2.7bn from the takeover announced yesterday. It may also snow in Sydney this Christmas.

The figures do indeed accumulate to £2.7bn, but it is hard to see how this deal from down under values NPI at anything like that. The only new money on offer is the £510m AMP is paying for goodwill. The balance is made up of £1.4bn of policyholders' own money and an £800m financing facility that AMP will generously make available to policyholders on commercial terms.

That makes it rather a good deal for AMP. Without overpaying, the Aussies have picked up a life business with a strong brand name and excellent distribution capabilities that can be integrated with their existing Pearl Assurance arm in the UK.

But it is an indifferent deal for NPI policyholders. The £200 cash payout dangled before with-profits policyholders may be enough to book next summer's holiday now.

But it is peanuts compared to the sums they could have made had they lodged their money with a life fund other than NPI. A policyholder who has been putting, say, £50 a month into an NPI endowment for the last 25 years can expect to see the fund mature with a value of £64,000 against the £120,000 that could have been earned with another life company.

AMP intends to distribute the £1.4bn built up in NPI's life fund. But this is hardly largess on the part of the Australians. This sum represents the assets backing their policies, a large chunk of which would have been distributed eventually to policyholders anyway in the form of terminal bonuses.

Even that £1.4bn is a movable feast as the figure was struck at the end of last year. Since then NPI has mortgaged £260m of its future earnings through a securitisation deal and may have to fork out £350m to cover its exposure to guaranteed annuity payments.

Policyholders could, of course, vote down the deal in the spring, but in reality their choice is to like it or lump it. The chances of a better offer from elsewhere are virtually nil as the auction has already

been long and exhaustive. Nor does soldiering on alone look like an option for NPI. The poor management of the company which has brought about its weakened financial condition meant that NPI had little future as an viable independent life office. Hardly a good prospectus on which to go to the market, as NPI policyholders are discovering.

UK economy

THE INTERNATIONAL Monetary Fund yesterday added its voice to the growing calls for more cuts in UK interest rates.

But the IMF, the Confederation for British Industry, the unions and just about everybody else you can think of may be disappointed, at least in the near term.

The latest indicators suggest the economy is not in quite as bad a shape as some of the more gloomy pundits were suggesting in the autumn.

Of particular note is the surprising strength of November's retail sales, released last week. Supposing the data can be trusted, which is a big if these days, con-

sumer confidence is not quite as low as feared. This, combined with evidence of continued growth in the services sector, may be enough to persuade the Bank of England to sit on its hands in January, although another cut is still on the cards in February.

In common with every other forecaster apart from the Treasury, the IMF finds it impossible to go along with the growth forecasts that Gordon Brown has assumed for next year and on which his ability to stick to the golden rule or borrowing only to invest depend.

The Chancellor believes growth will be between 1 and 1.5 per cent. The IMF, with the benefit of a little more hindsight and factoring in the impact of the Russian default crisis and the credit squeeze fore-shadowed by the near collapse of LTCM, reckons growth will undershoot 1 per cent.

However, it does, along with Mr Brown, believe that the slowdown next year will be short-lived, partly because of rate cuts here and elsewhere.

This all means that the Bank should be wary of cutting too far too fast and storing up trouble further down the line.

IN BRIEF

Bass chief to get £400,000 pension

SIR IAIN PROSSER, chief executive of Bass, will be entitled to a pension of £400,000 a year in three years' time. Sir Iain, who is 55, will be entitled to a full pension from the age of 58 even though the normal pension age at the brewing and hotel giant is 60.

The figures were disclosed in Bass's annual report, which also revealed that Sir Iain has been awarded 107,000 Bass shares worth £717,000 as part of the company's long-term incentive plan. In the year to September, Sir Iain received a salary of £914,000, an 11 per cent increase over the previous year.

ONS confident

THE OFFICE for National Statistics (ONS) said it had "absolute confidence" in its retail sales data, following criticism of recent official figures by leading UK retailers.

The ONS said official retail sales figures were based on a 5,000-strong sample of firms drawn from all parts of the retail sector, and, unlike survey data, were based on cash through the till, rather than comparisons with the previous year's trading.

Modern fund

THE TREASURY yesterday launched a new £2.5bn fund to support innovative investment projects which modernise and reform public services. The Capital Modernisation Fund will be allocated to government departments on a competitive basis.

Panel firm folds

CHRISTIES PANEL Products, a manufacturer and retailer of fitted furniture, yesterday called in administrators after making 370 staff redundant on Friday. Pannell Kerr Forster, the administrators, said the Bristol-based company was forced into the move by the recession in the furniture market.

ICI sale

QUEST INTERNATIONAL, a wholly owned subsidiary of ICI, yesterday completed the sale of its Natural Colours business to Christian Hansen of Denmark for \$65m (£33m). ICI said the proceeds would be used to reduce debt.

United News deal

UNITED NEWS & Media yesterday announced the purchase of NewsDesk International, an Internet service which distributes corporate news to journalists writing about high-tech stocks, for an undisclosed sum. The newswire service, believed to be worth around £15m, will become part of PR Newswire, a United subsidiary.

Telewest stake

THE FRENCH conglomerate Vivendi yesterday sold its remaining 6.5 per cent stake in the British cable television company Telewest, in the stock market for £209m. Telewest shares rose 6.25p on the news to 160.25p.

News Analysis: How can life insurers provide the retirement income they guaranteed?

The £10bn annuity timebomb

BY ANDREW VERITY

WHEN AMP, the Australian insurance giant, decided to bid £510m in new money for NPI, the mutual insurer, it knew it would have to accept NPI's financial condition, warts and all. As with other insurers, NPI now faces the problem of meeting its share of the multi-billion pound exposure caused by providing annuity guarantees.

Analysts say NPI needs to set aside about £300m to cover this. Other insurers such as Equitable Life may have an exposure of up to £1bn. The total sums involved are gigantic - up to £10bn for the whole life insurance industry.

What exactly is the annuity guarantee problem? The issue has crept up on the industry in the late 1990s, but its roots lie in the 1960s and 1970s. Starting in 1956, life insurers began to guarantee pension customers a minimum rate of income from savings when they eventually retired and bought an annuity.

At the time it was just a sales gimmick. The idea was that customers buying the old form of personal pensions - known as retirement annuity contracts - faced a fundamental uncertainty when they retired. On retirement, customers would be forced by the rules to buy an annuity that paid an income until death. The income paid out by the annuity depended on the assets used to back it, namely 15-year gilts. But gilt yields would fluctuate with long-term interest rates: £100,000 in pension savings might buy an income of £16,000 this year, but £13,000 next. Savers could never be sure how much income to expect.

The sales gimmick usually involved a clause promising customers a minimum annuity rate. Typically the clauses guaranteed an income worth at least 11 per cent a year of the amount saved, so £100,000 would yield an annuity income of at least £11,000.

Life offices believed the guarantees would cost them little. Since the Second World War long-term interest rates had been high, a reflection of the inflationary climate. It seemed highly unlikely that annuity rates, based on long-term interest rates, would fall below the guaranteed level.

Now comes the euro. In the past two years, as markets anticipate lower rates of interest, gilt yields have plunged to unprecedented lows. Life offices, caught in a trap they set them-



Life offices are caught in a trap, but the Treasury has warned them not to cut back on the benefits pensioners can expect **Brian Harris**

selves, face an unpleasant gap between the amount they receive in pension savings and the cost of financing the annuity they had promised.

Worse, the actuaries of the 1960s failed to take into account longer life expectancy. As people now live longer, annuity money is stretched over a longer period. The life office can't afford to pay as much in annual income, but the guarantees may force them to.

The total cost to the industry is estimated by the Government Actuary to be more than £7bn. HSBC Securities estimates that further market changes could push this to £10bn.

Unlike pension mis-selling, the guarantees are spectacularly good news for customers, especially those about to retire. Without them customers would have to plump for an annuity based on current market conditions. With long-term interest

rates so low, these give smaller retirement incomes than they have done for 30 years.

Stuart Bayliss of specialist adviser Annuity Direct says that by insisting on the guarantees, customers can bump up their retirement income by an average of 25 per cent. Policyholders may be unaware that they can get this benefit: the industry does little to publicise it.

There is now increasing tension between the industry and the Government over the issue. Equitable Life, thought by some to have a potential liability of more than £1bn, is embroiled in a legal battle with policyholders who claim it should pay up on guarantees.

Equitable claims that it only has to honour the guarantees in respect of part of a customer's pension saving. The terminal bonus - a sum paid on maturity and often worth tens of thousands of pounds - need not necessarily be paid to people who want the guarantee.

Policyholders claim this was never made clear and are now taking legal action against the society. Equitable claims the

wording of its guarantees fully justifies its stance, but many believe the Treasury is becoming irritated by this attitude.

Last week Patricia Hewitt, Economic Secretary to the Treasury, wrote a letter to the industry warning that the annuity guarantee problem must not be allowed to affect the benefits policyholders can reasonably expect from policies. In other words, life offices should not lower their bonuses to pay for the problem: any extra money needed should come from free assets.

The letter was interpreted as a veiled swipe at Equitable, which has comparatively few free assets. If it were forced to pay the guarantees from free assets, the impact on its financial health could be serious. It could even have to demutualise.

Ms Hewitt said the cost of the problem would largely be borne by the long-term funds of life offices. In quoted companies, these are 90 per cent owned by policyholders, while shareholders have a 10 per cent stake. So most of the cost is borne by policyholders.

But if the £7bn required to pay the guarantees grows, bonuses may be affected. In that case, says Ms Hewitt, shareholders will have to plough more money into the funds.

For the moment, most life offices have enough free assets to set aside the cost of the guarantees without slashing policy benefits. But it could get worse. John Russell, a senior analyst at HSBC Equities, feels that is more than a distant possibility. The cost of the guarantees depends on long-term interest rates: the lower they are, the more the guarantees cost.

If economists forecasting a period of deflation are correct, long-term interest rates could fall even further, massively increasing life offices' exposure.

To escape further trouble, life offices need higher interest rates, and that needs higher inflation. Mr Russell says: "Having worried about inflation for the last 30 years, the hole the industry has dug for itself is to be in a position where deflation is more of a threat. Inflation could, paradoxically, let the industry off the hook."

Gloom deepens for textile firms

BY ROGER TRAPP

THE GLOOM in the UK textiles industry deepened yesterday, with Dawson International warning that profits for the second half of the year were likely to be significantly below market expectations and Sherwood announcing that four factories are in line for closure with the loss of 300 jobs as a result of a company reorganisation.

Both Dawson, the Kinross-based specialist textile and apparel producer, and Sherwood, the Nottingham-based lace-maker, blamed the slowdown in demand on Britain's high streets. But there were also international factors besides the strength of sterling.

Dawson said that unseasonably high temperatures in the US for the past two months had "severely impacted" thermal apparel sales. The combination of this setback with unprecedented product returns from leading discount retailers reported in the first half would result in the sales and profits for the full year being lower than last year, it added.

As a result, production levels and costs are being reduced in the coming 12 months, leading to an exceptional charge likely to amount to £5.4m being taken in this year's accounts.

Although losses for the year to 2 January 1999 are likely to reach £11m before exceptional items, the company is confident that the moves will strengthen its position. Peter Forrest, chief executive, said the group would be in a position to exploit any upturn in consumer trading. Sherwood, which is the subject of a planned management buyout, said the reorganisation, expected to cost £6.8m, was due to continuing worldwide weakness in the demand for lace, combined with poor trading conditions in Britain.

The announcement of this exceptional charge comes on top of the £400,000 cost of closing the group's household lace operation announced in September.

With profits in the normally stronger second half of the year likely to be broadly similar to the first half's £3.2m, the company is predicting a pre-tax loss once these exceptional charges are taken into account.

Ushers goes private with fresh venture capital bid

USHERS OF Trowbridge the regional brewer whose shares were floated in March last year at 110p a share, is set to return to the private sector under its existing manager after a chequered career as a public company which cost it an estimated £3.5m in fees.

BY CLIFFORD GERMAN

After the stock market suffered a sharp fall and the backing finance was withdrawn, returned yesterday with a fresh bid of 112p, which the independent directors have recommended and the main shareholders have agreed to accept.

The offer is 24 per cent above the market price before the initial offer was made on 2 Octo-

ber and 15 per cent above the closing price of 87.5p last Friday. The shares rose 13p to 110.5p yesterday.

Three venture capital groups which held 49.3 per cent of the shares - Schroders Buy-Out Fund Number 2, SBC Equity Partners and Indecon, an SBC venture fund - have agreed to accept a reduced price of 106p for their holdings in order to bridge a gap be-

tween the maximum price the buyout team was willing to offer and the minimum price the independent directors were willing to accept on behalf of the private shareholders.

The management team will also sell their 7.7 per cent stake in the company in a separate deal, and surrender their options over a further 1.4 per cent, in return for a package of new shares and loan stock

valued at £2.3m plus £6.25m in cash. Their contracts will be unchanged, and the 330 employees have also been given continuity of employment.

Roger North, chief executive, said the buyout would give the management greater freedom to run the business and end a period of uncertainty which had led to a drop in the morale of employees and the departure of several key managers.

Ushers, which owns the brewery in Wiltshire and an estate of 574 pubs in the Midlands, the South and South-west England and South Wales, was originally part of Grand Metropolitan, but was sold off in 1991 to a management team led by three GrandMet directors.

Profits in the year to the end of October rose 29 per cent to £13.4m after exceptional costs of £500,000, on a turnover which

increased 17 per cent to £82.3m. Profits were below market forecasts, reflecting the difficult conditions in the industry, but all three divisions increased their contribution to operating profits, the chairman Tom Vyner said yesterday.

The pub estate reported a 14 per cent increase, and 5 per cent on a like-for-like basis, ahead of the UK market average.

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Coffee bar group City Gourmets yesterday took control of Newultra Limited in a £1.75m deal giving it six Rendezvous shops to take its total of coffee bars to 29. City Gourmets' shares closed down 0.5p at 29.5p. Pictured (left to right) at Rendezvous in Brent Cross, London, are City Gourmets property director Simon Brookes, chairman Nigel Whittaker and chief executive Gareth Lloyd Jones. *Tony Andrews*

Tough markets prompt ASW bid for rival Co-Steel

BY FRANCESCO GUERRERA

ASW, the troubled steel maker, is poised to buy its smaller rival, Co-Steel Sheerness, in a deal which would create an industrial group with annual turnover of more than £500m.

Shares in Cardiff-based ASW were suspended at 18.5p yesterday after it said it was in advanced talks with Co-Steel Inc, the loss-making Canadian steel producer over the acquisition of its UK subsidiary.

Sources said the deal could be completed this week. They added that a tie-up between ASW, the UK leader in the production of steel for the construction industry, and Co-Steel would lead to a number of redundancies among the enlarged group's 3,200 workers.

Most job losses are set to come from the floors of ASW's Cardiff factory and Co-Steel's works in Sheerness, Kent, as the combined group implements large cuts in production.

Insiders said ASW's takeover approach was driven by its need to mitigate the effect of tough market conditions on earnings. They added that the two companies operated in the same markets and would be able to extract "massive rationalisation benefits" from a merger.

"This is all about the reduction of capacity and the change in the product mix, and has been caused by the current state of the steel industry," said a person close to the talks.

Both groups' earnings have been savaged by the strength of the pound. Last year ASW, which derives half its turnover in the UK and half in France, posted profit before interest of £700,000 on turnover of £460m as steel prices fell. Co-Steel Sheerness turned over £150m, mostly in its Kent plant, which has the capacity to produce about one million tons of steel a year.

The company, founded in 1971, accounts for around a quarter of its Canadian parent's annual production. Co-Steel Inc is one of the world's largest steel producers: last year it had sales of \$1.6bn (£950m) and lost \$20.1m.

Buying Co-Steel Sheerness would help ASW strengthen its position in the production of steel for building contractors and civil engineers. It is already a leading European player with plants in the UK, France, Holland, Belgium and Italy.

Both companies said a merger would not give rise to competition issues as the European steel market is fragmented.

Housebuilder Tay fights off rebel investor

BY FRANCESCO GUERRERA

TAY HOMES, a small Northern housebuilder, yesterday angrily rejected proposals by a major shareholder for a complete overhaul of the board.

The company said the attempt by Sunley Family Limited to change the management was a "joker". Norman Stubbs, the chairman, said Sunley, a privately-owned housebuilder, was wasting its time as the board had enough institutional support to defeat a shareholders' revolt.

The rebel investor, which owns 10 per cent of Tay, wants to Mr Stubbs and chief executive John Swanson replaced by Peter Hedges, a former deputy chairman at construction group Taylow Woodrow, and Sunley head Richard Tice.

The little-known company is seeking to capitalise on some institutions' anger at Tay Homes' performance. The shares have been hit hard by the slowdown in the North of England, collapsing from 142.5p in March to 111.5p yesterday.

Sunley is understood to have the backing of Phillips & Drew, which owns 17 per cent of Tay. However, Mr Stubbs said the current board owned 23 per cent and was supported by most shareholders. Fidelity, with 10 per cent, and Foreign & Colonial with 7 per cent, are thought to support the board.

"This is just an attempt by a £20m-a-year company to win control of a £150m-a-year rival without paying a premium," said Mr Stubbs. Tay, which has a market value of around £30m, would seek to improve performance and grow through mergers with rivals of similar size, he said. "We would like a market capitalisation of around £150m through tie-ups with other small housebuilders."

Tay announced that it would scale down its operations in the North-west due to poor market conditions. The company said it would stop buying land in the area, which accounts for around a third of its 1,500 annual completions. The change would save £20m at year-end, including 13 layoffs. The money will be spent to increase volume in Tay's other regions, Scotland, Yorkshire and Oxfordshire.

Photobition targets Wace with £42m bid

PHOTOBITION, the aggressive graphics group, yesterday launched a hostile bid for Wace, its troubled rival, valuing each Wace share at £2.6p and the entire company at £41.7m, writes Peter Thal Larsen.

The offer was unanimously rejected by Wace's board as offering "inadequate value" to its shareholders, and it advised them not to take any action.

Photobition proposes merging its operations with Wace in a move to create a world leader in digital services with a network covering the UK, Europe, US, Australia and Hong Kong.

Eddie Marchbanks, Photobition chief executive, said he had approached Wace's management. "We had lunch about three weeks ago and I said we would be interested in bidding at a certain level. But they never got back to me."

A deal would almost certainly lead to job losses. Wace has 2,000 employees, about 500 in the UK. Photobition, which has roughly the same turnover, employs 1,060. "There may be a good reason why they have so many more staff, but I've got to get inside and have a look before I can answer that question," Mr Marchbanks said.

Wace shares jumped 10p to 51.5p, while shares in Photobition, which launched a £89m share placing to help fund any deal, dipped 1p to 239p.

It's no surprise that people dream about owning a ThinkPad 600. To begin with there's its head-turning appearance - stylish, elegant, sleek, a classic piece of modern design. Then there's the sophisticated technology. With Intel's fastest processor, a huge hard drive and CD-ROM capability, it has to be one of the most desirable mobile business tools around. Now comes the opportunity to make your dream a reality. Buy any one of the new selected ThinkPad 600 models and we'll give you £250 cash back. So, isn't it time you stopped dreaming? All you need to do is buy a selected ThinkPad model, send us a completed claim form and you'll receive £250. For more details on the promotion, visit www.ibm.com/pc/uk/tppromo1 or call Tanya Proud on 0870 601 0137. In Ireland phone 1850 22 00 33.

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| Price | Qty | Trl | P/E Code | High | Low | Stock |
|-------|-----|-----|----------|------|-----|-------|
|-------|-----|-----|----------|------|-----|-------|

[illegible][illegible]

Don't come back to Sunderland or we'll cut your throat. Sunderland fans to Clive Mendonca, whose hat-trick for Charlton led to his home-town club's stay-off

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Decline of the All Blacks likely to be temporary

THE MOST interesting development of the last year has been the decline of New Zealand's strength, relative to Australia and South Africa. Why, they have lost almost as many games on the trot as Bath. So far the authorities have stayed loyal to their affable and intelligent coach, John Hart - who is very different from the grizzled monsters that have been presented to us in the past.

I have never agreed with the modern view, in rugby, football and cricket alike, that coaches or managers (or whatever they are called) are invariably to blame when things go wrong - that they have what lawyers call "absolute liability". By the same reasoning, I do not think they should always be praised as supermen when things go right.



ALAN WATKINS

But there is little doubt that Hart bears some of the responsibility for his country's uncertain performance of late. At outside-half he has the reverse of Clive Woodward's perennial English problem. While Woodward is struggling to find

one player who can fill the position, Hart has two performers of world class in Andrew Mehrtens and Carlos Spencer.

Oddly enough, this luxury of choice seems to have affected the form of both players. Mehrtens' goal-kicking has gone awry. When he has been dropped to make way for Spencer, the kicking at goal has been even more fragile. Christian Cullen may be the best attacking full-back in the world - challenged on recent evidence by Matt Burke, though not by Percy Montgomery. But Cullen is even less reliable as a goal-kicker than Spencer.

What Hart clearly has to do is make up his mind about the outside-half position and whether he is going to accommodate the discarded player at second five-eighths

or at centre. He should then find a completely new and reliable kicker at goal.

It has been evident since his return from his medical trouble that Jonah Lomu is not the player he was. Whether his kidneys are better or not - one hopes they are - his heart does not seem to be in it. He appears to be going through the motions. He resembles a young fast bowler who possesses great pace and menace but whose back suddenly lets him down. He has an operation; it is successful; he returns; but somehow it is not the same. The confidence has gone.

At the same time, players, in England at any rate, who were alarmed by Lomu's sheer size during the last World Cup have become used to dealing with big backs. Any-

one who has had to tackle, say, Va'anga Tuigamala week in and week out, or Scott Gibbs for that matter, is not going to be intimidated by Lomu, even though he is built differently from Tuigamala or Gibbs.

The big back is a development that has come to rugby union from rugby league. There is another development, arrived by the same route, which also renders players such as Lomu less dangerous than they were four years ago. This is the two or even three-player tackle, which is not pretty and smacks of bullying, but is nevertheless both legal and effective.

And then there is the New Zealand pack. Few expected either the forwards or the whole side to miss Sean Fitzpatrick quite as

much as they evidently have. Taine Randall, who was pushed into the captaincy too young and with too little experience, is clearly not an adequate substitute. He may also be at some difficulty in holding his place at No 6, come the World Cup.

There is the further question of body mass. New Zealand, to their credit, have never gone for sheer bulk. If a slightly more accomplished forward is up for selection against another who happens to be a stone heavier, it is the better rather than the heavier player who wins the vote; whereas in many other rugby countries the selectors' vote would go the other way.

The New Zealand selection policy has, until very recently, been completely vindicated. They have gone in for fit, hard, raw-boned for-

wards. As one Lions forward who has played against them, said to me: "They're very difficult to play against because they're all knees and knuckles and elbows, sharp edges everywhere."

The current first choice New Zealand pack weighs less than that not only of South Africa, Australia, England and France, but of Wales as well. The major difference these days is that heavy packs are, with all the training that goes with professionalism, as fit and fast as the traditional New Zealand eight.

But the decline of New Zealand is, I am sure, only temporary. Provided they can sort out their goal-kicking difficulties, they may well turn out to be the best bet for the World Cup.

Books for Christmas: The nature of rugby genius and the genealogy of a tennis institution provide the festive focus

Baptists of fire and Boks of delight

FIRST, A warning. The most vivid, enjoyable page-turner of a rugby book issued this year - or, to be absolutely accurate, reissued this year - is so completely wholesome that it stands out from its rivals like a clean-cut chorister in an alley full of gangsta-rappers. There is no sex, no drugs - not even the merest trace of creative - and the closest thing we get to rock 'n' roll is the odd blast of song from a few Welsh Baptists.

What *Rugby: Body and Soul* (Mainstream, £9.99) does give us is a unique insider's account of the nature of sporting genius. More than that, it is a glorious, if somewhat wistful, hymn to the union game as a unifying social and cultural force. Its author, Bill Samuel, grew up in the Swansea Valley village of Craigcymmer, mined coal at the Clydach Merthyr Colliery, turned out for rugby clubs from Vardre to Cardiff via St Luke's College and Llanelli, and, some eight years after taking a teaching post in Pontardawe, took under his wing a gifted young ooboy by the name of Gareth Edwards.

The rest, as they say, is history. And what a history it is. Samuel, an awfully modest witness as well as an incisive and entertaining one, tells his tale without fuss or artifice as he places the great scrum-half-to-be in the unglamorous but richly supportive context of his West Wallian surroundings. If you can smell the sweat and the liniment, you can also revel in the soft, damp earth of a wonderful rugby nation at the height of its magnificence. Deeply touching and, in places, genuinely funny.

Edwards plays a part in the second of this season's outpourings of red-shirted Welshness. You might say a good Ulsterman like Peter Jackson, rugby correspondent of the *Daily Mail*, should spend his free time recording the memories of the Lions of Wales (Mainstream, £14.99), but he has lived in Cardiff for more years than anyone cares to remember and besides, any account of the 'Lions of Ireland' would have sent his already legendary phone bill into orbit.

Jackson's choice of interviewees is inspired: all the Olympian heroes - Gareth, Barry, JPR, Merv the Swerve - have a chapter to themselves, as do the natural comics. Bobby Windsor's contribution is chockingly rip-roaringly hilarious - the story of the gin, the ice cube and the airborne thermometer is a classic - while Delme Thomas, that great man of Stradey, leaves an equally deep impression of rugger-

BY CHRIS HEWETT

bugger bonhomie. Add to this the author's eye for a story, whether it be the truth behind Barry John's premature retirement or Mervyn Davies' near-fatal brain haemorrhage, and you have a fine read on your hands.

Which is more than can be said for Bill McLaren's *Dream Lions* (Collins Willow, £16.99), a depressingly unilluminating thumbnail sketch of the leading British Isles performers of the last 25 years or so. Apart from the odd error of fact and carelessly miscaptioned photograph, there is at least one selectorial misjudgement: the absence of Ben Clarke, by common consent the outstanding performer in the 1993 series in New Zealand, as one of the four finest blind-side flankers of the most recent Lions era. Worse still, the writing lacks both humour and anecdotal colour.

Thankfully, that disappointment is counterbalanced by Peter Bills' chirpy labour of love, *Passion in Exile: 100 Years of London Irish RFC* (Mainstream, £20). Mind you, if you can't crack a joke or three with this subject matter, you should consider a stint on the EastEnders script-writing team. Consider Tommy Joy, a stalwart Exiles prop from the 1960s: "I remember Dick Spring the full-back who would later rise to Deputy Taoiseach of the Dail, coming over; we shovelled concrete together on a building site in Hammersmith. He did it for a couple of days, then went off to New York. He was a very nice fellow. He liked his pint and his parties. But I'd have to be honest and tell you he wasn't much bloody good at shovelling concrete."

Of course, today's pampered professionals are not required to shovel anything other than pound coins. They can still talk, though, and they do so in numbers to Donald McRae, whose *Winter Colours* (Mainstream, £16.99) is this year's most obvious attempt to give rugby reportage a literary gloss. McRae, himself South African, takes his Springbok upbringing as the launchpad for a meandering ramble through high-time union. It has its lows and its longueurs, but few of its 387 pages miss the mark entirely. Indeed, McRae's opening salvo, an emotional examination of his own apartheid-scarred sporting background, is easily the most involving piece of rugby writing of the last 12 months. If the rest of the book fails to maintain this early momentum, the failure is wholly understandable.



Gareth Edwards helps Wales to a 9-6 victory over England in his 50th international appearance in February 1978

Allsport

Dream that made the Davis Cup

ALTHOUGH THE first Davis Cup match was played in 1900, the centenary of the event has been brought forward a year, possibly to avoid clashing with other celebrations, such as those marking the 21st century and the millennium.

Starting in Australia next month, Dwight Davis's imposing trophy - the silver punchbowl with accompanying silver tray atop two huge wooden plinths (a third is in the making) with 30 engraved silver plaques - is going on a grand tour to honour the 100th anniversary of the moment in 1899 when Davis, a Harvard student from a rich family, was inspired to propose the event.

The trophy is due to appear at Birmingham's National Indoor Arena in April for the match between Britain and the United States in the first round of the World Group. The original Davis Cup match was between the United States and the British Isles in Boston in August 1900. Davis's idea for an international team event for tennis occurred after he read newspaper coverage of the sailing of the America's Cup races. Davis and a group of fellow tennis players had just returned to the East Coast of the United States after a

BY JOHN ROBERTS

tour of the West Coast. "This trip resulted in great benefit to the interests of lawn tennis in the west," Davis recounted, "and the idea came to me that an international competition would be of the greatest possible benefit to the game throughout the whole of the United States and abroad."

World-wide interest in the Davis Cup has continued to grow. Last year, 131 nations participated. But the United States Tennis Association is having a hard time persuading its top players. Pete Sampras and Andre Agassi, to take part.

The anomaly is addressed by John McEnroe, who, it may be remembered, gave the best and worst of himself to America's cause, in a foreword to the International Tennis Federation's centenary book *The Davis Cup* (by Richard Evans, Ebury Press, £14.99).

"Davis Cup has brought countries together through sporting contact, often in the face of political opposition," McEnroe writes. "And, in the early years, it gave them the incentive to make those long journeys which are so commonplace and

easy for us now... The Davis Cup offered me more immediate pleasure than almost anything else I accomplished in my career. My parents brought me up to believe that it was an honour to be asked to play for and represent your country, and that is why I find it so strange - and so disheartening - that some of my compatriots seem to find it a burden."

McEnroe made his Davis Cup singles debut in the last match between the United States and Britain, the 1978 final at the Mission Hills Country Club at Rancho Mirage, in the California desert. The turbulent left-hander contributed straight sets wins against John Lloyd (6-2, 6-2, 6-2) and Buster Mottram (6-2, 6-2, 6-1) as the Americans won, 4-1. "I've never been made to look an idiot on court before," Lloyd said. "Not by Borg, not by Connors, not by anyone until I played McEnroe today."

Also a brilliant and dedicated doubles player, usually partnered by Peter Fleming, McEnroe thrived on the special atmosphere of team play. And he was involved in the two longest singles matches in Davis Cup history, defeating Sweden's Mats Wilander in six hours and 22 minutes in St Louis in 1982 and los-

ing to Boris Becker after six hours and 21 minutes in Hartford in 1987. "That, for all his behavioural shortcomings, spoke volumes for his commitment to the cause," Evans writes. The Davis Cup, in which Evans acknowledges the diligent research of other authors, past and present, does old Dwight proud.

A biography of the founder of the competition, Dwight Davis - the Man and the Cup, by Nancy Kriplein, is due to be published by Ebury Press in March.

Given the retrospective mood, I take the liberty of recommending an American study of the game published in 1995. *Sporting Gentlemen - Men's Tennis from the Age of Honor to the Cult of the Superstar* (by E Digby Baltzell, Simon and Schuster, available from Sportspages, £20) is a revealing social history befitting its author, emeritus professor of history and sociology at the University of Pennsylvania. "This book is the product of over half a century of playing and loving tennis and a decade spent in writing and research," Baltzell says. "As Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr. once put it, 'A page of history is worth a volume of logic.'" The prologue sets

the tone: "I began this book in 1984, the year Jimmy Connors and John McEnroe disgraced themselves and their country by their crude and rude behaviour in the course of losing to Sweden in the Davis Cup."

The *Ultimate Encyclopedia of Tennis - The Definitive Guide to World Tennis* (by John Parsons, Carlton, £19.99) is not as modest as the title suggests. A labour of love, the book presents a broad perspective on the sport's great personalities and locations. Parsons pops up again with the text for *The Official Wimbledon Annual 1998* (Hazelton Publishing, £20), illustrated by the All-sport photographic team of Gary M Prior, Mike Hewitt and Alex Livesey.

For the past eight years, Alan Little, the All England Club's honorary librarian, has produced what is regarded as the Wisden of Wimbledon. The 1998 *Wimbledon Compendium* (The All England Club, £8) is essential for anyone interested every aspect of the championships since they began in 1877.

The ITF World of Tennis (edited by John Barrett, Collins Willow, £12) celebrated its 30th edition this year. Good value, as ever.

John Roberts

Sixth new signing joins Halifax Nicol in the wars again

FOR HALIFAX, hitting one out of two Wigan targets is not bad. One of the Super League's busiest clubs during the close season had their sights on Darryl Cardiss and Terry O'Connor from last season's Champions.

Yesterday, they completed the signing of Cardiss, 30, who can play almost anywhere in the backs. The former Great Britain Academy international has played full-back, wing and half-back for Wigan, without commanding a permanent first team place. He becomes the sixth signing for a club which refuses to rest on the laurels of last season's top three finish.

RUGBY LEAGUE

BY DAVE HADFIELD

But Halifax's hopes of adding O'Connor to their pack have been laid to rest by the Great Britain prop agreeing a contract extension at Central Park. O'Connor still has two years to run on his current contract, but was regarded as available for a move for most of last season.

His late surge of form won him back his place at both club and Test level. The extra year added to his current deal will keep him there until he is 29 and will intensify the com-

petition for front-row places next season, when Brett Goldsponk from St Helens will expand an already healthy range of options.

Wigan's coach, John Monie, is in Australia considering how best to fill their one vacant overseas spot, with Melbourne's Brett Kimmorley one name mentioned in dispatches.

The former Great Britain hooker, Lee Jackson, has won the first round of his contest with Terry Newton for that role at Leeds. Newton finished the Test series against New Zealand as his country's hooker, but the Leeds coach, Graham Murray, has signalled his intentions

for 1999 by awarding the squad number 9 to Jackson, who has returned to Britain after a stint with Newcastle Knights in Australia.

Newton is inevitably concerned about his future and has been linked with a possible move to Wigan, his home-town club. Murray has reassured him that he still plays an important part in his plans, although that could be as a utility forward and tactical substitute. The first test of whether the two players can be kept happy will be the Boxing Day friendly against Halifax, who may include Cardiss among their new recruits for the match at Headingley.

BATH'S WORST fears were confirmed last night when their former captain Andy Nicol was ruled out for the next six weeks while he recovers after damaging the medial ligaments to his left knee, an injury suffered in the weekend's Allied Duxbury Premiership defeat against Saracens.

Nicol now joins a lengthening list of Bath crocks as they enter a crucial run of away matches. The reigning European champions were already without long-term casualties Jon Preston and Phil de Glanville, as well as the captain, Richard Webster, and hooker Mark Regan who will both be out for a further two weeks.

RUGBY UNION

BY DAVID LLEWELLYN

But Nicol was still a relieved man last night after leaving hospital following an extensive examination. "The good news is that it is just the medial ligaments that have been damaged and nothing else in the joint," said Nicol. "I should be back by the middle of February."

Lesser men would have thrown in the bloodied towel a long time ago, but the Bath scrum-half has nothing but nickel-plated indifference to injury and pain.

The damage to the left knee is just one more blow in the Scotland scrum-half's sporting career. Indeed, with his medical history he has become something of an expert in rehabilitation. In the last five years Nicol has had his right knee rebuilt, damaged the medial ligaments in his left knee, suffered three awkward hamstring tears and dislocated an elbow. However, he has insisted: "The thought of giving up never entered my head."

The Irish Rugby Football Union has confirmed it will not be involved in the British and Irish League proposed for next season.

Wyer cutting a Dashing figure

LORCAN WYER will probably tell his offspring this Yuletide they will receive what is deserved. He has certainly delivered himself the same message and sees victory for Simply Dashing in Saturday's King George VI Chase under his urgings as the most apt result.

We could call this horse and jockey Team Scalpel. Between them they have seen a lot of surgeon's steel.

Simply Dashing used to do a fair impression of a hurricane after his races until a series of soft-palate operations corrected breathing problems. Lorcan Wyer may consider himself lucky to be able to see a racecourse at all after an accident at Aintree just over two years ago which came close to mashing his face. Those who saw it found it difficult to refer to racing as "a game" in the aftermath.

Wyer's accomplice, Thornton Gate, fell that day, and the jockey had little time to consider his bruises before another runner came slicing by with his hooves. "My face was in the wrong place at the wrong time," he says. "A horse behind stood on my face and moved it around a little bit." Almost 10 hours of surgery followed.

"After about three days in hospital I asked my wife what I was like as there weren't any mirrors left lying around," Wyer adds. "She said I looked absolutely wonderful, which means she either loves me very much or is a tremendous liar because it looked a bit of a mess when I eventually saw it. Two minutes can be a long

time in jumps racing, but I don't dwell on Aintree much because I felt then and still feel now that I've got a good few seasons in me. It's certainly not a job you can do half-heartedly. I'm pretty fatalistic and I think if things are meant to happen they happen. That's why I won't be getting too worried this

RICHARD EDMONDSON
Nap: Just Good Fun
(Ludlow 12.45)
NB: River Wye
(Ludlow 3.15)

week thinking about the race." At 34, Wyer marches on. Simply Dashing himself has been a taxing horse to follow. Just over 12 months ago he won the First National Bank Chase with Richard Dunwoody on board at his barnacle-like best after the gelding had smashed into Ascot's ninth fence. Such was his rate of progression at that stage (his record read 13 wins from 20 races) that some judges expected the horse to appear from his box with wings protruding from his belly one morning.

However, the seven-year-old has not won since, largely because of his respiratory problems. Simply Dashing has finished runner-up on his last two high-profile starts though to good horses from Martin Pipe's stable.

"We don't get carried away with hype up at our place, but we have always thought Simply Dashing was a Saturday horse,

a big-race horse," Wyer says. "We've already hit the crossbar twice this season and if there is any justice it might be our turn on Saturday."

John Francome has promised to send me a frontal photograph of A P McCoy so that I can see what he looks like. It's not a bit of him I've seen for a while."

At Kempton on Boxing Day, Team Scalpel will be representing Team Easterby, the father and son training partnership of Peter and Tim. The name on the licence behind the mantlepiece clock at Great Habton might be different but otherwise it is business as usual. And Peter would not mind a King George, as the Christmas bauble is one of the few prizes to elude him in his sparkling career.

"It's been a very natural

transition," Wyer says. "The gun'or, or the old gun'or should I say, still does as much as he ever did and there would have to be something disastrously wrong if he wasn't working in the yard when you arrived in the morning. And Tim has always played a big part anyway so things haven't changed that much."

And so now connections who never allow their own trumpet are represented by a horse who could formerly have belched out enough air for an entire brass section. "We're not people to go over the top but we go there with a fighting chance," Wyer says. "Paul Carberry (Wyer's fellow Irish jockey) has a saying at the moment after he's come in off a winner 'I had the right stuff there', he says. I think I've got the right stuff for Saturday."

Fitzgerald gets Imperial Call

MICK FITZGERALD has been given the mount on Imperial Call ahead of Richard Dunwoody in the King George VI Chase on Boxing Day. The gelding's trainer, Raymond Hurley, said yesterday evening: "We had a meeting of the owners today and it was decided to offer the mount to Mick Fitzgerald. He has accepted and we are delighted."

It had been thought that Dunwoody would be offered the ride but his agent, Robert Parsons, commented: "Richard hasn't been contacted and he has no mount in the race for the first time in many years."

Tony McCoy, who was also linked with Imperial Call, is to ride last year's runner-up, Challenger Du Lac.

Meanwhile, Michael Hourigan is still looking for a jockey for Dorans Pride, who runs in the Ericsson Chase at Leopardstown on Monday. Dunwoody has been the regular pilot for Dorans Pride but the former champion will be aboard Florida Pearl for Willie Mullins.

In the same day the Welsh National, bookmaker opinion is that Dom Samourai will avenge his 1997 defeat by Earth Summit.

In last year's race Nigel



Lorcan Wyer: in pursuit of 'justice' in the King George

More money pushed through for Mill

TEETON MILL has joined See More Business at the head of the market for the King George VI Chase on Boxing Day after sustained support yesterday.

Ladbrokes and the Tote and the Venetia Williams-trained Hennessy Gold Cup winner to 5-2 joint-favourite as punters seek a seventh victory by a grey horse since Desert Orchid's first success in 1986. The Tote lightened Teeton Mill from 100-30, while Ladbrokes had begun trading at 3-1 yesterday. "Since we started betting on the race on Saturday that

has been the horse that everyone has wanted to know about," Ladbrokes' Andy Clifton said.

"Other firms were bigger than us on Saturday morning but I think people have looked at the race and taken the view that only two horses can win it. "It is only the fact that there has been good support for See More Business as well that has stopped Teeton Mill being outright favourite."

| KING GEORGE VI CHASE (3m) | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|------|------|-------|-------|--------|-------|-------|---------|--------|
| Horse (Trainer) | Cost | Win | Place | Third | Fourth | Fifth | Sixth | Seventh | Eighth |
| See More Business (P. Nicholls) | 9-4 | 5-4 | 5-4 | 5-4 | 5-4 | 5-4 | 5-4 | 5-4 | 5-4 |
| Teeton Mill (A. Williams) | 3-1 | 1-4 | 5-2 | 1-4 | 5-2 | 1-4 | 5-2 | 1-4 | 5-2 |
| Imperial Call (R. Hurley) | 4-1 | 5-1 | 7-2 | 4-1 | 5-1 | 7-2 | 4-1 | 5-1 | 7-2 |
| Simply Dashing (T. Carberry) | 5-2 | 5-4 | 5-2 | 5-4 | 5-2 | 5-4 | 5-2 | 5-4 | 5-2 |
| Challenger Du Lac (M. Pipe) | 10-1 | 5-1 | 10-1 | 5-1 | 10-1 | 5-1 | 10-1 | 5-1 | 10-1 |
| Super Tonic (R. Allen) | 16-1 | 16-1 | 16-1 | 16-1 | 16-1 | 16-1 | 16-1 | 16-1 | 16-1 |
| Concorde (H. Dineen) | 20-1 | 20-1 | 20-1 | 20-1 | 20-1 | 20-1 | 20-1 | 20-1 | 20-1 |
| Cyborg (M. Pipe) | 20-1 | 20-1 | 20-1 | 20-1 | 20-1 | 20-1 | 20-1 | 20-1 | 20-1 |
| The Grey Monk (S. Haywood) | 20-1 | 20-1 | 20-1 | 20-1 | 20-1 | 20-1 | 20-1 | 20-1 | 20-1 |
| Mulligan (D. Nicholson) | 20-1 | 20-1 | 20-1 | 20-1 | 20-1 | 20-1 | 20-1 | 20-1 | 20-1 |
| Go Ruffalo (D. Nicholson) | 20-1 | 20-1 | 20-1 | 20-1 | 20-1 | 20-1 | 20-1 | 20-1 | 20-1 |

Each-way a quarter the odds, places 1, 2, 3 (Punters, Saturday)

| WELSH NATIONAL H'CAP CHASE (3m 5f 110yds) | | | | | | | | | |
|---|------|-----|-------|-------|--------|-------|-------|---------|--------|
| Horse (Trainer) | Cost | Win | Place | Third | Fourth | Fifth | Sixth | Seventh | Eighth |
| Dom Samourai (M. Pipe) | 3-1 | 7-2 | 7-2 | 3-1 | 7-2 | 3-1 | 7-2 | 3-1 | 7-2 |
| Earth Summit (M. Pipe) | 4-1 | 4-1 | 4-1 | 4-1 | 4-1 | 4-1 | 4-1 | 4-1 | 4-1 |
| Margrave (R. Allen) | 5-4 | 5-4 | 5-4 | 5-4 | 5-4 | 5-4 | 5-4 | 5-4 | 5-4 |
| Earth Summit (M. Pipe) | 5-4 | 5-4 | 5-4 | 5-4 | 5-4 | 5-4 | 5-4 | 5-4 | 5-4 |
| Flamingo (M. Pipe) | 5-4 | 5-4 | 5-4 | 5-4 | 5-4 | 5-4 | 5-4 | 5-4 | 5-4 |
| Flamingo (M. Pipe) | 5-4 | 5-4 | 5-4 | 5-4 | 5-4 | 5-4 | 5-4 | 5-4 | 5-4 |
| Flamingo (M. Pipe) | 5-4 | 5-4 | 5-4 | 5-4 | 5-4 | 5-4 | 5-4 | 5-4 | 5-4 |
| Flamingo (M. Pipe) | 5-4 | 5-4 | 5-4 | 5-4 | 5-4 | 5-4 | 5-4 | 5-4 | 5-4 |
| Flamingo (M. Pipe) | 5-4 | 5-4 | 5-4 | 5-4 | 5-4 | 5-4 | 5-4 | 5-4 | 5-4 |

Each-way a quarter the odds, places 1, 2, 3 (Punters, Saturday)

| 1999 CHAMPION HURDLE (2m 110yds) | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|------|------|-------|-------|--------|-------|-------|---------|--------|
| Horse (Trainer) | Cost | Win | Place | Third | Fourth | Fifth | Sixth | Seventh | Eighth |
| Imperial Call (R. Hurley) | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 |
| Imperial Call (R. Hurley) | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 |
| Imperial Call (R. Hurley) | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 |
| Imperial Call (R. Hurley) | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 |
| Imperial Call (R. Hurley) | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 |
| Imperial Call (R. Hurley) | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 |
| Imperial Call (R. Hurley) | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 |
| Imperial Call (R. Hurley) | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 |
| Imperial Call (R. Hurley) | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 |

Each-way a quarter the odds, places 1, 2, 3 (Punters, Saturday)

| 1999 CHELTENHAM GOLD CUP CHASE (3m 2f 110yds) | | | | | | | | | |
|---|------|------|-------|-------|--------|-------|-------|---------|--------|
| Horse (Trainer) | Cost | Win | Place | Third | Fourth | Fifth | Sixth | Seventh | Eighth |
| Imperial Call (R. Hurley) | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 |
| Imperial Call (R. Hurley) | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 |
| Imperial Call (R. Hurley) | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 |
| Imperial Call (R. Hurley) | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 |
| Imperial Call (R. Hurley) | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 |
| Imperial Call (R. Hurley) | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 |
| Imperial Call (R. Hurley) | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 |
| Imperial Call (R. Hurley) | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 |
| Imperial Call (R. Hurley) | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 | 15-1 |

Each-way a quarter the odds, places 1, 2, 3 (Punters, Saturday)

RACING RESULTS

LINGFIELD

Going: Standard

12.40: (m 5f, apprentice handicap) 1. NOKURAN (C. Cogan) 11-2

2. Night City (P. Davies) 11-8

3. Whistler (P. Davies) 11-8

4. Merry Poppins (P. Davies) 11-8

5. Merry Poppins (P. Davies) 11-8

6. Merry Poppins (P. Davies) 11-8

7. Merry Poppins (P. Davies) 11-8

8. Merry Poppins (P. Davies) 11-8

9. Merry Poppins (P. Davies) 11-8

10. Merry Poppins (P. Davies) 11-8

11. Merry Poppins (P. Davies) 11-8

12. Merry Poppins (P. Davies) 11-8

13. Merry Poppins (P. Davies) 11-8

14. Merry Poppins (P. Davies) 11-8

15. Merry Poppins (P. Davies) 11-8

16. Merry Poppins (P. Davies) 11-8

17. Merry Poppins (P. Davies) 11-8

18. Merry Poppins (P. Davies) 11-8

19. Merry Poppins (P. Davies) 11-8

20. Merry Poppins (P. Davies) 11-8

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Return to France '98: England coach stands by his decisions and believes he was a kick away from ultimate success

Hoddle's regrets too few to mention

BY GLENN MOORE
Football Correspondent

THERE IS nothing like a heroic failure to blunt the critic's edge. To go down fighting against all odds strikes such a chord in British hearts that it evokes more admiration than a clinically achieved success.

It is a curious habit and one which has brought succour to many a gallant loser from Jim Peters to Nigel Mansell.

Glenn Hoddle's England team were this year's vanquished heroes and, six months on, the memories of summer still bring conflicting emotions. "Not regret, but sadness," said Hoddle when we spoke last week.

This has been a difficult month for the England coach. A dislocated family Christmas is to come, his employers are in turmoil and he has had to endure a series of television programmes raking over England's World Cup defeat to Argentina.

The two remembrances of England's match with Argentina were trying enough, he then had to sit through the BBC's *Sports Review of the Year* - which featured an electronically created shot of David Batty scoring that penalty.

"That was a bit of a shock," he recalled. "I've had very mixed emotions watching all the programmes. In a way they are great to see but it is very hard to sit and watch. The Argentina match was such an amazing game, that's why they made the programmes. If we had got to the final and lost 3-0 they would not be making programmes like that."

Indeed, any such programme in Brazil will, this Christmas, be more recriminatory than celebratory. Here the fact of defeat has been submerged by its nature.

"People remember our game as the best of tournament, like Italy v Brazil in 1982," Hoddle said. "When I've travelled around since people talk about it and say what a great game it was. It has put us in the minds of people overseas."

"When you are involved in the match it is difficult to appreciate it, you are focused on the game, but when you see the way it unfolded you realise how epic it was. It's then the emotions kick in. You also see how they got every decision."

The most vivid memory is of Michael Owen's goal. When an event is seen so often on television the video images can sometimes supplant the mental recollection it is still the one he saw from the bench. "From the first touch on the thigh, and the way it opened up, we knew immediately there could be something special happening. It was very similar to the way he got the penalty."

Owen's delayed World Cup entrance was one of the most criticised aspects of England's campaign. Hoddle's similar treatment of David Beckham and his choice of penalty-takers are also regarded, by many, as serious errors.

Hoddle remains as unrepentant now as then.

"At the time Becks was not focused. No one who is not working with a group of players can know



That penalty, that diary. Glenn Hoddle has been buffeted by the critics of his performance as England coach but he is proud of that 'epic' encounter with Argentina

Allsport

that. But he's been magnificent this season, the way he has dealt with the problems of the World Cup.

"It was the same with nursing Michael into the tournament. Look what happened to Ronaldo, he's older and more experienced but he couldn't cope with it. I've been there as a player. I know the pressures. It was the right decision."

"As for the penalties. The four defenders were shattered. David Seaman obviously wouldn't take one, so that left five. Batty was fresh, he was positive. It comes to keeping a cool head. I've been there. It's not about practice it's a mental thing, you have to put everything out of your mind and be very positive."

There was the diary. Again, there are no regrets. "Whatever I did there was always going to be someone having a pop. The book is an honest account of what was going through my mind at the time, a lot

of people have said to me it is interesting and a lot have said what a lot of rubbish has been written about it.

"I knew there'd be people looking to have a go. I heard some of them got together beforehand and planned it."

Personally I have no knowledge of such a conspiracy though it is not entirely implausible. That Hoddle believes it suggests an embattled mind and, while he is bullish now, he admits he was very low in the wake of England's exit.

"The two to three weeks afterwards were a really bad time for me.

I wouldn't say I was distraught but I found it very hard. I didn't do much, just played with my children. Of course, the first thing my son wanted to do when I got back was play penalty shoot-outs. He said: 'You're David Seaman, I'm Ronaldo.' It was probably the best thing. If you had written a script, it would have been the perfect ending."

Hoddle had been due to return to France to cover a quarter-final match for television but pulled out. "I said 'I can't face it' but I went to the semi-final in Marseilles."

This match, between Brazil and the Netherlands, also went to pen-

alties and Hoddle said: "I wasn't looking forward to it but it was a bit like the hair of the dog. It got me further down the line. You never really get it out of your system but it helped."

"I don't look back on the tournament with regret. It is more a sense of sadness. If we had won that game, and we were so close, the belief in camp would have been such that we could have gone all the way."

This, then, is much as expected. No regrets, just a belief that, despite going out in the second round, England were a penalty or a referee's decision from winning the tournament. Not everyone would concur but it

is possible. England played some spellbinding football that night in St Etienne and, though the Dutch and Brazilians barred the way, the confidence gained from beating Argentina with 10 men would have been immeasurable.

Instead confidence has ebbed away as the side have stumbled into their European Championship campaign.

"There has been a hangover from the World Cup for many teams," Hoddle said. (Denmark, Spain and Germany are other examples). Teams like Sweden and Bulgaria could focus on the European Championships. The Czechs, for example, came second in Euro 96, but didn't qualify for the World Cup, and have now started off with a flyer."

England resume their campaign against Poland in March but first face France, also at Wembley. "People said 'don't play France' but,

with Poland coming up, I wanted us to play at home with the pressure on us. It's a terrific match but, realistically, if we beat the world champions 3-0 and then draw with Poland, that's not what I want, I'd rather have the reverse."

Paul Gascoigne may be involved. "I'm delighted he's beginning to address his problems and we are monitoring him over a 12-match period. With his ability he is going to have good games but we are not going to bear when he has an average game."

That suggests Gascoigne will need a lot of good matches to be selected and he may have to sustain his form until April to gain a recall. By then we may be closer to discovering whether Hoddle's England will forever be remembered, like the athlete Jim Peters, for heroic defeat, or, like Mansell, become a success.

TOMORROW

IS RONALDO STILL THE WORLD'S GREATEST FOOTBALLER?
RICHARD WILLIAMS REPORTS FROM MILAN

Red, red Rosler remembers the City slickers

IT HAS BEEN an ignominious year for Manchester City. And the final ignominy must surely be that Uwe Rosler, the club's former much-loved striker, is now playing for the Red Devils. The Red Devils of Kaiserslautern in Germany, that is.

While City's players negotiate new service station stops en route to the likes of Colchester and Bournemouth, it has been strictly business class for Rosler, as Kaiserslautern have manoeuvred their way into the European Cup quarter-finals. He is now looking forward to a trip to Bavaria and an all-German tie against Bayern Munich.

"I'm 30 years old now and you don't often get the chance to play in the Champions' League and to play for a team that can win something," Rosler said, explaining why he joined Kaiserslautern this summer. "That's why I decided to come back to Germany because I still think I'm young and good enough to try and compete against the best."

Rosler, who was top scorer for three of the four seasons he was at City, has not lost the goalscoring habit. As the Bundesliga enters its winter break with Kaiserslautern lying third, Rosler has scored four league goals and two in the German Cup.

Most spectacularly, he grabbed a hat-trick after coming on as a first-half substitute in Kaiserslautern's final Champions' League group F match against HJK Helsinki. Rosler also could not resist the opportunity of working with Otto Rehagel,

BY JOHN SINNOTT

Kaiserslautern's feisty 60-year-old coach.

"When I was playing for Magdeburg 10 years ago he tried to sign me when he was Werder Bremen's coach," Rosler said. "For some reason the deal didn't come off. Rehagel knows how to handle people. He never criticises players in front of the media; it's always done behind closed doors."

"A lot of players look up to him like a dad because he has so much life experience. It's similar to what Alex Ferguson has done at Manchester United."

Rosler says his return to Germany has been eased by the fact that both his fellow Kaiserslautern strikers, Olaf Marschall and Jürgen Rische, also came from East Germany. Indeed Rosler played his first professional game alongside Marschall.

"We have a long history together. There's competition for places, but we're friends and that makes it easier when someone isn't starting or not playing for the whole 90 minutes," Rosler commented.

Kaiserslautern, like City, are a club that like to do things differently, albeit somewhat more successfully. Last season Rehagel's team became the first promoted side to win the championship since the Bundesliga started in 1963. "I had a fantastic time at City and it was a hard decision to leave," Rosler said. "But when I joined Kaiserslautern



Uwe Rosler is in goalscoring form for Kaiserslautern Allsport

I felt from the first minute that there was a different atmosphere in the club and a lot of positive thinking. I saw the way they'd prepare for games. The players are only thinking about winning. Before every game we go into a training camp. That's harder for the players' families but for football reasons it's really good because it gives us a lot of time to talk about tactical things."

Rehagel, according to Rosler, is a big fan of wingers, which immediately triggers a memory of the fun he had at City during his first two seasons. "At Kaiserslautern, Andreas Buck is on the right and Martin Wagner on the left and they just run up and down the line and cross balls," Rosler said.

"That's great for a striker. Kaiserslautern are the only team in Germany that play this way. It's like playing for City when Peter Beagrie was playing on the left and Nicky Summerbee was on the right."

Dynamo Kiev insist their star men are staying put

UKRAINE

THE "FOR SALE" signs hanging over the pick of Dynamo Kiev's squad have been hurriedly hauled down now that the Ukrainians have landed a lucrative European Cup quarter-final against Real Madrid.

The surprise package of last season's Champions' League after their return from a UEFA ban imposed for trying to bribe a referee in 1995, had run the risk of being reduced to a nursery for rich Western outfits. Top of the shopping list was 22-year-old Andriy Shevchenko, who first hit the headlines with a hat-trick in Dynamo's 4-0 trouncing of Barcelona at Nou Camp last year.

When the Ukrainians made a shaky start to this season's Champions' League campaign, Shevchenko and his strike partner Serhiy Rebrov were widely assumed to be Italy-bound by the new year. But, while the veteran full-back Oleh Luzhny has been sold to Benfica and Olexander Holovko has been on trial at Liverpool, the rest of the squad will now be staying in Kiev to face the European champions in March.

"The fact that we qualified for the quarter-finals means that none of our top players, including Shevchenko and Rebrov, will be sold to Western clubs before the end of the season," said a club spokesman, Alexei Semchenko. "Only veterans, like Luzhny and Holovko, who have done a lot of good for the club, have been given permission to move abroad. Other than that, our team will stay intact."

The Ukrainians, who make no secret of being unable to compete with Western clubs for wages, also sold their 30-year-old captain, Yuri

AROUND THE WORLD
EDITED BY
RUPERT METCALF

Kalvitintsev to Turkey's Trabzonspor last month. But the club president, Hryhory Surkis, has maintained that Dynamo plan to keep their two key strikers, Shevchenko and Rebrov, and hopes the veteran former Soviet coach Valery Lobanovsky can rebuild another, highly disciplined, fast-breaking unit behind them.

"They are not for sale," Surkis said recently, after persistent rumours of bids from Italian and Spanish clubs. Shevchenko has said he is happy - for now - to stay in Kiev drawing a salary estimated by club officials at around £50,000 per year, a fortune by Ukrainian standards but a pittance for a world-class player.

FRANCE

CHARLES BIETRY, the president of struggling Paris Saint-Germain, resigned yesterday. Reeling from a string of disastrous results, PSG, France's richest club, are in 11th place in the First Division, 22 points behind the leaders, Marseilles.

The club have been in crisis since Bietry, a former sports journalist, took over prior to the season. After a string of poor results, including a

defeat by Israel's Maccabi Haifa in the European Cup-Winners' Cup, the coach, Alain Giresse, was fired. But results have not improved since Bietry reappointed Arthur Jorge as the coach. On Saturday they were beaten 2-0 by Lille, and, to add insult to injury, the former PSG hero Patrice Loko hit both goals.

THAILAND

PETER WITHE is still a Thai national hero despite being caught up in a "coach-for-votes" scandal that rocked English football. It was revealed last week that the Football Association had paid part of Withe's salary as the Asian country's coach in the hope that Thailand would vote for England's bid to host the 2006 World Cup in return.

That, however, has not dented Withe's popularity in Bangkok. The former England centre-forward took the Thai team all the way to the semi-finals of the Asian Games on home soil, after a sensational win over South Korea with just nine men. Withe said his conscience was clear, despite his part in the FA scandal. "I was asked to come here to do a job to help with the development of football in a developing country," he said after his Thai team lost their Asian Games bronze medal play-off with China 3-0 on Saturday. "I'm passionate about football and I'm passionate about my job. I'm a football person. I stay out of politics."

The match with China saw Withe reunited with his fellow Englishman Bob Houghton, now China's coach - 26 years after they last played together for Arcadia Shepherds in South Africa.

Saints are hoping to catch 'the Train'

THE SOUTHAMPTON manager, Dave Jones, flew in the Colombian World Cup striker Adolfo Valencia for transfer talks last night.

Valencia, known as "The Train", could be snapped up by the Saints for a knock-down fee from his club in Bogota, Independiente Santa Fe, but Jones wants to see him in training first. The 30-year-old has won over 60 caps for Colombia and wore the No 9 jersey at the World Cup finals in France, so he would qualify for a work permit.

Valencia wants to cash in with a move to Europe after spending most of his career in South America, although he had a spell with Bayern Munich in Germany. He has a reputation as a skilful goalscorer.

Jones has been forced to look abroad by excessive domestic prices. He will also make a decision on the Peruvian striker, Waldir Perez, in the next 24 hours.

Perez, 25, is rated at £2.5m by his club Alianza Lima. He does not need a work permit because he has an EU passport.

Steve McMahon will play a match today for the first time in six weeks. The Liverpool and England forward, who has rested a nagging Achilles tendon injury since early November, will play in a specially arranged practice game against Bradford City at the Anfield club's Melwood training complex.

The German Bundesliga club TSV 1860 Munich have denied reports that they are interested in signing Liverpool's unsettled former German international striker, Karlheinz Riedle.

The 27-year-old German goalkeeper Stefan Klos is expected to arrive in Glasgow today to finalise the

details of his protracted £700,000 move to Rangers from Borussia Dortmund.

Rangers are also expected to tie up the £100,000 signing of the Northern Ireland Under-21 international midfielder Lee Feeney from Linfield later this week.

Port Vale yesterday completed the £175,000 signing of Tony Rougier, the Hibernian winger, but anticipate problems securing a work permit in time for the Trinidad and Tobago international to play over Christmas or in the FA Cup tie with Liverpool.

The former England striker Mark Hateley, who was dismissed by Hull City earlier this season, has confirmed he is talking over a possible return to management with the Scottish League club St Mirren, who sacked their manager, Tony Fitzpatrick, last week.

There are fears that the special influence enjoyed within world football by the four home nations may be under threat. Since the end of the Second World War, England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland have been guaranteed the exclusive right to nominate a FIFA vice-president between them. But that privilege now seems likely to be challenged, due to the allegations of corruption aimed at the Football Association's chairman, Keith Wiseman.

A motion calling for the end to that right is set to be debated at special congress of football's world governing body in Los Angeles in July next year. Scotland's David Will is currently the home nations' FIFA vice-president.



Ty Law, of the New England Patriots, hangs on to a pass intended for San Francisco 49ers wide receiver Terrell Owens

Inspired Falcons fly high on emotion to claim title

WITH JUST one week remaining in the regular season, the play-off picture is finally starting to make sense. In the NFC, the Minnesota Vikings clinched home advantage throughout the play-offs with a remarkable 50-10 humiliation of the Jacksonville Jaguars, while victories for the Dallas Cowboys and the Atlanta Falcons confirmed their continued participation into January. The Green Bay Packers and the San Francisco 49ers have earned wild card berths, while the New York Jets are divisional winners, while Buffalo and the New England Patriots have secured wild cards. Barring a late season collapse, the Miami Dolphins should see off the challenge of the Tennessee Oilers to claim the last place.

The most emotional game of the weekend came in Detroit, where the Atlanta Falcons secured only their

second NFC West title with a 24-17 win over the Lions. The win was achieved without their head coach, Dan Reeves, who underwent quadruple heart bypass surgery last Monday, but there is little doubt that his absence acted as a source of inspiration for the team.

"This win today was special, just special," said the running back, Jamal Anderson, whose one-yard touchdown run in the fourth quarter secured victory. "It was a little scary, but I'm glad he got to watch us win. He's a good man."

Under Reeves' shrewd guidance, the Falcons have enjoyed the best season in their history, but Sunday's joy was tempered by the news that the coach has been readmitted to hospital in Atlanta, after watching his team triumph on television at home.

Skelton saves his best till last

NICK SKELTON had to wait until the final day of this year's Olympia Show Jumping Championships before recording his first win of the meeting, with a wonderfully polished display of speed and precise turns.

Riding 13-year-old Virtual Village Showtime, Skelton won the Euro-sport Christmas Hammer by 1.31sec, beating Ireland's Trevor Coyle on Vivaldi and Britain's Di Lampard on Equity.

It was a timely victory, since Skelton is about to be dropped from the Virtual Village team. Now looking for a new sponsor, he knows that winning is the best means to that end. He had produced a class round against the clock when riding Hopes Are High in the Traxxata World Cup qualifier on Saturday, when he achieved the fastest time only to topple a plank off the final fence.

Showtime, owned by Sue Welch and who has twice won the Horse of the Year Show Grand Prix, has been with Skelton for seven years. The mare may be slightly overshadowed nowadays by the younger Hopes Are High, but she can still produce some sparkling performances.

After his own swift round, Skelton had been particularly worried by two of his remaining opponents: John Whitaker and Belgium's Philippe le Jeune. Whitaker was eliminated when 18-year-old Virtual Village Welham he knew better than his rider. Landing over the fourth fence, the horse should have turned left. Instead he jumped the fence immediately ahead of him and that was the end of Whitaker's chance.

Le Jeune had been ripping round smartly until his mount, Valiska Forever, was caught unawares by the penultimate obstacle which was a small "bounce" - a double in which there was no room for a one-jumping stride - and he stopped there.

Beat Mandli, from Switzerland, won the earlier P&O Events Christmas Eve Six Bar on Gravour 004 - a nine-year-old he has been riding for only three weeks. "He is very careful and has a good brain," Mandli said, after jumping four clear rounds to gain his first win with the horse.

Second place was shared by Andrew Davies on Satchmo and Germany's Rene Tebbel on Le Patron. Davies, whose yard is on Cardigan Bay in Wales, had only entered his mount at the last moment and it must have seemed like a silly idea when he had a crashing fall in the collecting ring before his first round. He overhauled himself three clear rounds in the arena, before having one error on his fourth appearance.

Davies used to ride Skelton's current top mount, Hopes Are High, and he was distressed when David Broome (then the owner) decided in June on a change of jockey. The 24-year-old Davies has a natural talent, which was recognised yesterday when he received the Raymond Brooks-Ward Memorial Trophy, which is awarded to the rider aged 25-or-under who shows the most potential.

Celtic's shares are 'overpriced'

THE CONSORTIUM pushing for control at Celtic may hold off from making a formal bid for the club, because they believe it is overpriced as a consequence of their interest.

The group, led by the former Celtic player, Kenny Dalglish, and backed by Jim Kerr, Jim McAvoy and the Bankers Trust are reluctant to pay above the odds for Fergus McCann's 50.3 per cent stake in the Parkhead club. They first approached the Celtic managing director in October following confirmation that McCann will be leaving at the end of this season. The consortium's fear is expounded by the Simple Minds singer Kerr, who said: "You don't want to be paying more for something just because it has your name on it."

Making a formal bid would cost the consortium around £1m in legal fees and it is understood they are unwilling to make that move at the what they believe to be the inflated level of the current share price.

The consortium met advisers yesterday in an attempt to clarify their next move. Celtic have challenged the consortium to lift the confidentiality regulations which are preventing both sides of the debate from disclosing what has been discussed.

Since Celtic's rejection of the consortium's proposals last Friday, the consortium have broken their silence but left several issues unanswered by citing confidentiality. Dalglish's only comment yesterday was to affirm: "We are not about to go away. We have major finance in place and will continue to pursue the issue."

Devils' hot streak puts Superleague summit in sight

CARDIFF DEVILS can close the gap on the Sekonda Superleague leaders, Manchester Storm, to just one point with victory at Newcastle Riverkings tonight.

Paul Heavey's side have won seven of their last eight league matches, with their only blemish during that run coming against Storm. In winning their last four, including

strongest teams in the league now. Goalkeeping is one of their key areas with Derek Berofsky having put in some inspired performances this season, along with Steve Lyle.

"Their defence is also very solid and can contribute to the offensive side of their game, with Kip Noble being one of the highest scorers on the team. But the biggest problem

is that they can score from anywhere," he said.

Cohras, in contrast to Cardiff's form, have lost three of their last four and are second from bottom.

But Heavey knows Newcastle have the ability to pull off a shock. "We haven't played them since the opening game of the league season. But all three matches have been

SNOW REPORTS in association with WorldCover Direct

| Resort | Area open | Comment | Slopes (cm) | Last snow | Temp | Forecast |
|----------------------|-----------|---------------------|-------------|-----------|------|------------|
| ANDORRA | | | | | | |
| Soldeu | 60% | Packed powder | 70 100 | 21.12 | -12C | Light snow |
| AUSTRIA | | | | | | |
| St. Anton | 70% | Man-made cover | 10 30 | 04.12 | 4C | Post snow |
| Mayrhofen | 80% | V good higher up | 5 75 | 14.12 | 1C | Cold, snow |
| CANADA | | | | | | |
| Whistler | 85% | Firm packed snow | 180 215 | 20.12 | -6C | Light snow |
| FRANCE | | | | | | |
| Les Deux Alpes | 40% | Upper runs good | 50 130 | 21.12 | -2C | Post snow |
| Les Menuires | 50% | Upper runs good | 40 90 | 21.12 | -3C | Cloudy |
| ITALY | | | | | | |
| Cavalese | 70% | Partially open runs | 30 40 | 02.12 | -2C | Light snow |
| San Cassiano | 20% | Man-made cover | 10 40 | 28.11 | -5C | Cloudy |
| NORWAY | | | | | | |
| Gelso | 30% | Firm packed snow | 20 30 | 14.12 | 0C | Settled |
| SWITZERLAND | | | | | | |
| Nendaz | 40% | Mont Fort glacier | 60 20 | 12.12 | 3C | Cloudy |
| UNITED STATES | | | | | | |
| Killington | 40% | Packed snow | 55 90 | 27.11 | 0C | Changeable |

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AMERICAN FOOTBALL

NFL: New England 24 San Francisco 21; Green Bay 30 Tennessee 22; New York Giants 20 Carolina 20; St. Louis 13; Chicago 24 Baltimore 3; Detroit 17 Atlanta 24; San Diego 10 Oakland 17; Seattle 27 Indianapolis 23; Arizona 19 New Orleans 17; Dallas 13 Philadelphia 9; Minnesota 50 Jacksonville 10.

AMERICAN FOOTBALL CONFERENCE

| Team | W | L | T | P | PF | PA |
|---------------|----|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| New York Jets | 11 | 4 | 3 | 256 | 256 | 256 |
| Atlanta | 9 | 6 | 274 | 206 | 206 | 206 |
| Buffalo | 8 | 6 | 355 | 300 | 300 | 300 |
| New England | 9 | 5 | 327 | 291 | 291 | 291 |
| Indianapolis | 9 | 5 | 291 | 291 | 291 | 291 |

CENTRAL DIVISION

| Team | W | L | T | P | PF | PA |
|--------------|----|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Jacksonville | 10 | 7 | 371 | 325 | 325 | 325 |
| Tennessee | 8 | 7 | 314 | 284 | 284 | 284 |
| Pittsburgh | 7 | 8 | 260 | 282 | 282 | 282 |
| Baltimore | 5 | 10 | 250 | 232 | 232 | 232 |
| New England | 9 | 5 | 327 | 291 | 291 | 291 |
| Indianapolis | 9 | 5 | 291 | 291 | 291 | 291 |

WESTERN DIVISION

| Team | W | L | T | P | PF | PA |
|---------------|----|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Dallas | 11 | 4 | 385 | 256 | 256 | 256 |
| San Francisco | 11 | 4 | 385 | 256 | 256 | 256 |
| San Diego | 11 | 4 | 385 | 256 | 256 | 256 |
| Seattle | 11 | 4 | 385 | 256 | 256 | 256 |
| Denver | 11 | 4 | 385 | 256 | 256 | 256 |
| San Francisco | 11 | 4 | 385 | 256 | 256 | 256 |

FOOTBALL

TOUR MATCH (Pleasanton, CA, 1st day of tour): West Indies 3-75; South Africa 1-88-4 (5 Koenig 52).

FOOTBALL

SEVENTH ROUNDS (Brisbane): Tottenham 2-0 and 110-2; Queensland 1-64 and 175 (C Milne 3-29, G Rowell 4-54). Tasmania won by eight wickets, (Sydney) New South Wales 3-50 and 75-2 (5 Warner 0-22), Victoria 4-38-9 dec (M Mott 105). (Perth) South Australia 30-4 dec and 34-5; Western Australia 35-4 dec (M Mott 123).

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SPORTING DIGEST

ARSENAL are giving a trial to Andres Oper, a 21-year-old Estonian international forward who plays for Flora Tallinn.

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ICE HOCKEY

SEKONDA SUPERLEAGUE: London Knights 2 Apr Scottish Eagles 2 (or).

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SPORT

GLENN HODDLE REFLECTS P24 • KING EDWARDS IN HIS PRIME P21

Di Canio disputes suspension

PAOLO DI CANIO yesterday appealed to the Premier League against a two-week suspension imposed upon him by Sheffield Wednesday.

Di Canio is now nine days overdue from a period of compassionate leave - he was allowed home to bring his wife, Elisabetta, and baby daughter back to England. The 30-year-old striker's non-appearance led to Wednesday suspending him for 14 days without pay from 12 December, a ruling which has infuriated Di Canio.

FOOTBALL
BY IAN PARKES

Wednesday's secretary, Graham Mackrell, said: "I understand from the Premier League he has appealed against the imposition of our suspension for his failure to report back."

Di Canio would be eligible to return in Saturday's home match against Leicester after an 11-game suspension for his shove on referee Paul Alcock. Wednesday are threatening

to place Di Canio on the transfer list as he remains incommunicado in his wife's home town of Terni, near Rome. The striker's agent, Moreno Roggi, has since said Di Canio is suffering from stress and depression and is unlikely to fly back until 4 January at the earliest. He said a doctor's certificate verifies the illness, leaving Wednesday with no grounds to enforce the suspension.

Mackrell said: "I think we can now assume he will not be available for our game on Box-

ing Day and will remain in Italy for the time being. We are hoping he will return but any suggestion of us flying out to talk to him are out of the question. He is a contracted employee of Sheffield Wednesday Football Club and we are entitled to expect him to work."

A hearing will be held next month, with the relationship between club and player almost at breaking point. Di Canio has already been fined a staggering £78,000 by the club and the Football Association, added to

which were the £12,000 in legal costs for his disciplinary commission hearing.

The referee Paul Durkin, who sent off Arsenal's Gilles Grimandi during the Gunners' victory over Leeds on Sunday, has dismissed the Frenchman's claims that he did not make any contact. I have never done that in my life, not hit someone else with my head.

"At first I thought the referee was going to show me the yellow card and I did not think that was fair. When he pulled out the

"I never touched the other player with my head and I would like the authorities to look at my case," Grimandi said. "There was a foul on me in the first place. All I did was put my head forward to let the other player know I was not happy about the foul. I honestly did not make any contact. I have never done that in my life, not hit someone else with my head."

Grimandi declared his intention to appeal after becoming the fifth Arsenal player to be sent off this season.

red card, I could not believe it," Grimandi said.

Arsenal's manager, Arsène Wenger, joined Grimandi's defence, saying: "Grimandi was badly fouled two or three times. And then the guy stamped on him before he was sent off."

But Wenger added that his defender was ill-judged in his reaction. "Grimandi made a movement of head-butting him but didn't touch him. It was a bad reaction. He shouldn't have done it," he said.

Return to France '98, page 24

Honda heads back to F1 fray

MOTOR RACING

HONDA MOTORS announced in Tokyo yesterday that it plans to return to the Formula One circuit with a full racing team in 2000, marking the end of an eight-year absence from the sport its engines once dominated.

The Honda president, Hiroyuki Yoshino, told reporters that a comprehensive team, using its own engine, chassis and management, would begin full-scale testing early next year with an eye on the 2000 championship.

The new team means Honda's approach will be similar to that of the Italian constructor Ferrari, which manages its own team as well as making its own engines and chassis. Other major car makers on the circuit supply their engines for independent racing teams to use.

Honda had announced its intention to return to the track earlier this year but had given no date for its comeback, which has been the subject of much speculation in the Japanese sports press.

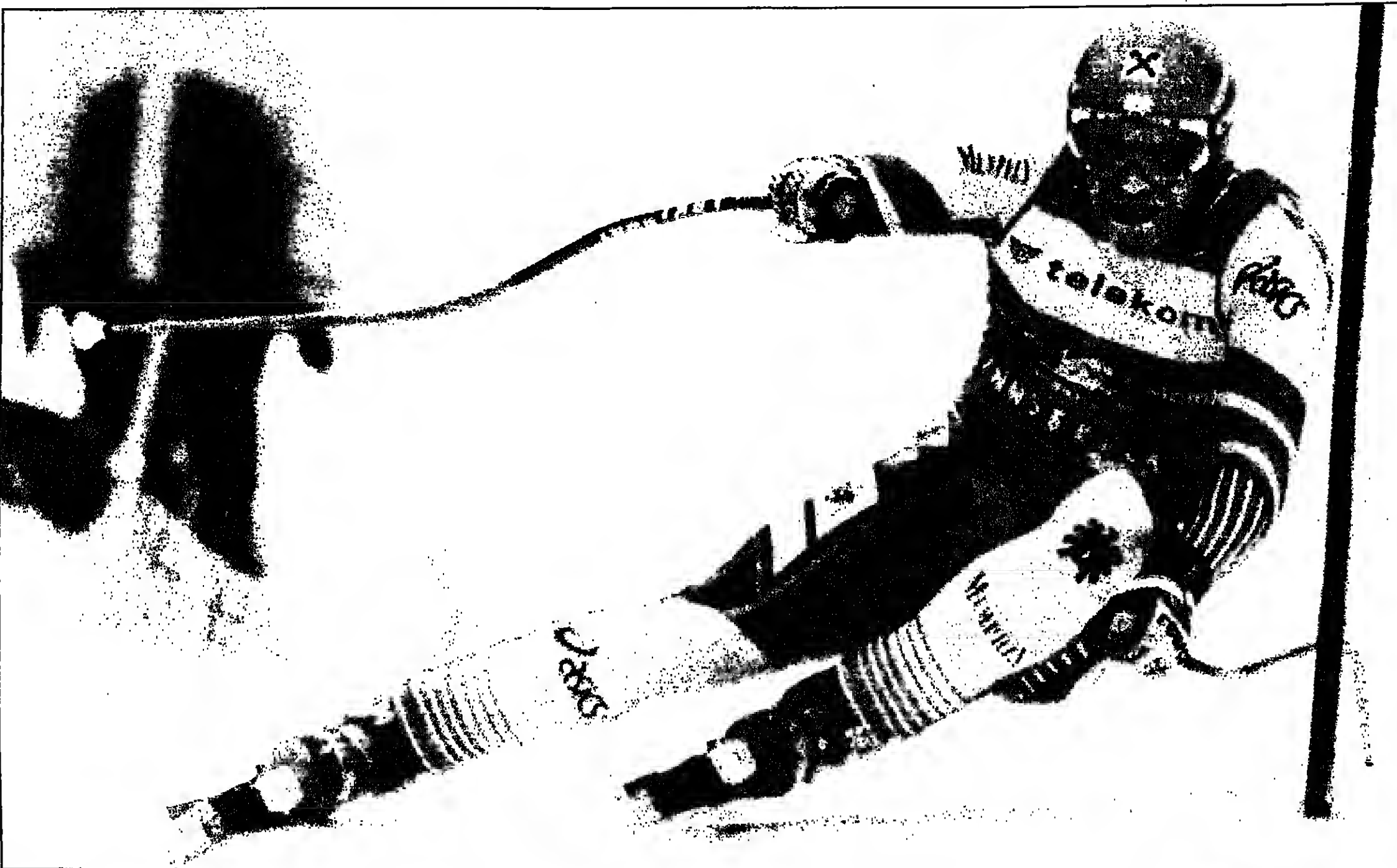
Yoshino said that many of Honda's engineers joined the company out of an interest in F1 racing and that the return would give a healthy boost to morale.

He doubted that the company would be able to win the championship during its first year back on the circuit, although it hoped to be a viable contender within three years.

Honda took part in F1 racing as a full team between 1964 and 1968, winning two out of 35 races.

However, the manufacturer shot to prominence in the sport in the late 1980s and early 1990s when it dominated the constructors' championship, winning the title six consecutive years until 1991.

Honda withdrew from motor racing after the completion of the 1992 circuit, stating that it had achieved its objectives in the sport.



Austrians sweep to world record

SKIING

BY ADRIANA PONTIERI

HERMANN MAIER followed in the tracks of his hero, Franz Klammer, leading a record Austrian sweep of the top nine places in a World Cup super-G in front of 20,000 fans yesterday.

It was the first major race held on Innsbruck's Patscherkofel slope since the Austrian Klammer's memorable downhill run for 1976 Olympic gold and the most dominant performance by one country in 30 years of the World Cup.

French women had held the previous record when they took the top six spots in a downhill run in Abetone, Italy, in 1968.

An emotional Maier, who came away from the Nagano Olympics this year with two gold medals and the memory of an astounding downhill crash, said: "I was miles away from the ideal track today. I was so tired and was so wide going around the gates. I felt and must have looked like Franz Klammer in the '76 Olympics."

"But I was obviously fast enough for victory. We need more races like this - the spectators were amazing and the piste was perfectly prepared."

All-rounders have had a punishing schedule with four races - two downhills and one giant slalom in Italy as well as the Innsbruck super-G - held in the last four days.

Maier, who picked up his third victory of the season and 14th overall by posting a time of 1:23.52sec, snatched the lead in the overall standings from the Norwegian, Lasse Kjus.

The former bricklayer, who is only in his third World Cup season, won the opening giant slalom in Sölden and a super-G in Val d'Isère one week ago.

"People who have said my form was so-so this winter forget that this time last year I only had two season wins," said the 26-year-old from Flachau, who has won every race he has entered on home soil in 1998. "I have extra motivation for home races and tend to fight more. I'm looking forward to all the Austrian races in January."

Innsbruck has always been a good venue for Austrian skiers. Egon Zimmermann captured the downhill gold medal in the first Olympics hosted in the Tyrolean provincial capital in 1964.

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TUESDAY REVIEW

COMMENT • FEATURES • ARTS • LISTINGS • TELEVISION



Keith Lamour

BY BERYL BAINBRIDGE

I said, 'Mummy, what's it like to be old?' She said, 'Inside, I'm still 25.' Then her eyes filled up and a drop of water fell down her cheek. Two weeks later she died, alone

And now I am old

Thirty years ago, my mother travelled up from Liverpool to stay with me, something she did every four months or so. It was winter and she wore her beaver fur coat, a garment so heavy in weight that she tottered under its load. Every time her taxi halted outside, I ran to the door with love and pleasure in my heart. An hour or so later, the feeling had evaporated and I wondered how I would get through the next four days: not because the love had gone but rather that it was blocked up; stemmed by circumstances.

Nothing either of us did, or expected, hit the right note. I hadn't the proper cutlery; my hair needed cutting, perming; the curtains needed washing; the children were lovely but that was accidental rather than a matter of upbringing. She always brought her ballgown, although she knew it was beyond the dreams of avarice that we'd be going to such an outlandish event; she didn't notice the clean sheets on her bed; she played Rummy with the children and openly cheated; she said her lamb chop was overcooked. When I moved too swiftly, the tulle on her ballgown, hung from the top shelf of the bookcase, billowed out in reproach. Perhaps you can only really love your parents when you're little - dependent. Later on, it's adult versus adult.

Two days later we went to Brown's Hotel for coffee because she liked going to posh places. I couldn't really afford it, but I used the child allowance. If I'd have said I was short of money she'd have told me to come home. The day before she'd taken a bus to the Hilton in Park Lane, bought a newspaper, and insisted it be put in a carrier bag imprinted with the name of the hotel. When she got home she flashed the bag and boasted of how a gentleman caller had taken her out for tea.

We sat there in Brown's talking of this and that. Yes, the floral displays were very nice: I might have a book published soon, maybe, nothing definite: the editor was rumoured to be having a breakdown. Her bridge partner, Minnie, had thrown a wobbler at the Wine Tasting Night; my brother Ian was doing very well in his law practice in Montgomery. He was up for Mayor Tommy Sutton was on the way out... stomach troubles; she blamed the cow midden outside the kitchen window. Did I remember Charlie White and that night the hay fork had gone up his nose?

I could tell by the look in her eyes that my hair was too long. God knows, if we hadn't been related we'd have had nothing in common. Then, I said, out of nowhere, only not really, because I wanted to hurt her because she was hurting me: "Mummy, what's it like to be old?"

I didn't know her age; it was a closely guarded secret. Now I think she would have appeared to be in her early sixties; in reality she was 71, had a dicky heart and a show-off personality; the latter trait, having no outlet, she shuffled on to me.

There was a man in Brown's, at the next table, who had something wrong with his leg. He kept bending down and scratching. I was watching him when my mother made a funny sound, and when I looked at her I saw her eyes had changed. She was really concentrating on me, as if I was really there. For a second she was not my mother but someone real, someone outside of me.

She said, "Inside, I'm still 25", and her mouth worked as though she wanted to tell me something else, but no words came. Then her eyes filled up and a drop of water slid down her cheek and splashed on to that wretched fur coat; it hung a moment - I watched it - and soaked away. Two weeks later she died, alone, her teeth under the pillow and £3 in her handbag and her world.

I saw her dead in the Chapel of Rest in Formby, Lancashire. She was lying down in what looked like one half of a cardboard Easter egg with a paper frill all round. Her oil-varnish was chipped, and when I kissed her she was so icy, so hard, that the tear I dropped on to her cheek bounced on to the floor.

I've been more fortunate than my mother. She was a product of the early part of the century, a time when women relied on men for financial support, for status, for a reason for their existence, in that they were the bearer of children and the keeper of the home. In my youth, if you weren't engaged before you were 20, there was obviously something wrong; you were destined for the shelf.

Somewhat dusty, I got married at 21, and two years later Colin Wilsoo wrote *The Outsider*, a book about how the artist must be free - my husband was a painter, on canvas rather than walls - and after reading it, though I expect there were other pressures, not to mention my immaturity, he walked out. Not financially - that's the difference between then and now. He gave me a house, all the furniture and £7.10 shillings a week maintenance, a provision so generous that the divorce courts thought there was some kind of collusion.

Once he'd gone, I started to write more diligently, though not with the idea that I'd make any money. In those days filthy lucre was an extraordinary, miraculous by-product of creative activity. The years passed, books got published, my daughters and son grew up, left home and had children of their own.

And now I'm old. One hundred years ago, 50 even, a woman of my age, 64, would have been considered ancient. I dye my hair, as did my mum, but the dyes have improved; have five false teeth - my Mum had not a single real tooth in her head beyond her 19th year; liver spots on the back of my hands; wrinkles; and a tendency to ask for a drop of brandy without

the slightest feeling of faintness. Two hours after getting up, I feel tired and am apt to doze off while watching television, but I can work, if writing can be called that, into the small hours of the night. I believe the brain is like a muscle, which atrophies if it isn't exercised. My mum may have thought she was 25 in her head, but that was because it was then that she stopped being curious, introspective. Her fault, bless her, was just that she let life get the boot in. Also, she'd run out of money.

In my case, the one drawback to growing old is the inescapable knowledge that it leads to the grave, although I have been anticipating such a trip for the last 30 years. As all my relatives kicked the bucket from cardiac arrest around the age of 70, I reckon I now have about six years to go, which is a pity because a dicky heart makes for a swift exit and I would much prefer to linger, pencilling last notes and murmuring farewells.

Best, before vanishing on to that darkling plain, it would be satisfying to recite those lines, however inaccurately, of the poet Matthew Arnold: *Ah, love, let us be true to one another... for the world that seems to lie before us like a land of dreams, hath neither truth, nor hope, nor certainty...*

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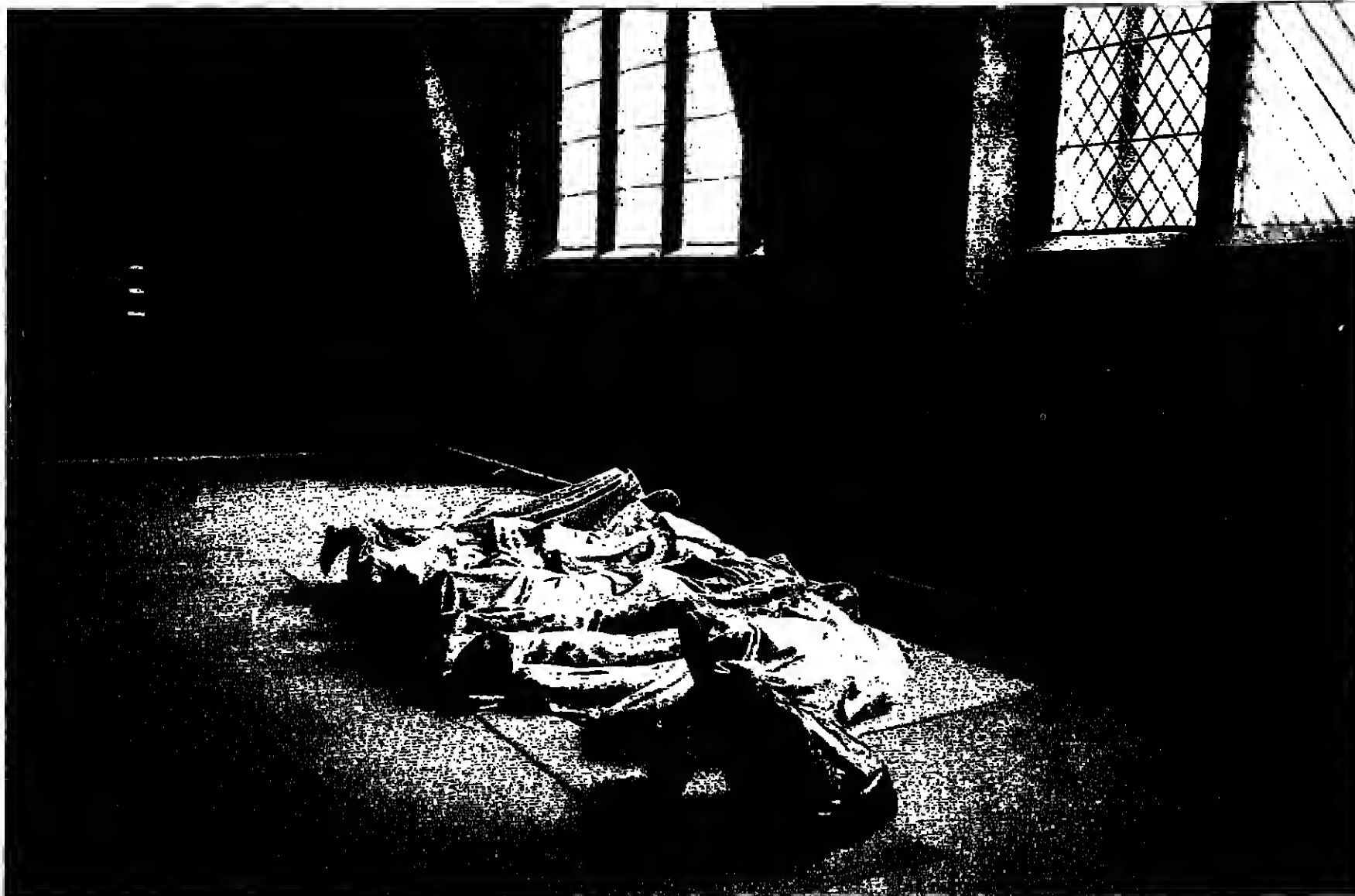
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Dressing the Cathedral No 2: The Holy Family and other figures of Ely Cathedral's Nativity scene resting under wraps

Brian Harris

Iraq's Blitz spirit

Sir: The hope that the bombing of Iraq will provoke the Iraqis to rise against their leader seems to me to be ludicrous.

My experience of being bombed during the Second World War (I was stationed in London during the Blitz and the attacks by V1 and V2 missiles) did not make me want to throw out Winston Churchill - quite the opposite. But it did give me a profound and increasing dislike of the perpetrators of the bombings, namely the Nazis.

Why should the Iraqis be different?
Dr J AUDREY STEVENSON
Darsham, Suffolk

Sir: Misinformation from Iraqi academics and Andrea Needham (Letters, 19 December) illustrates our government's astonishing neglect in failing to ensure wide understanding of present realities in Iraq. Our media are equally at fault. Many journalists are well aware of what Saddam does, but prefer to dwell instead on the miseries of his people. Do those stories sell more easily?

It is not sanctions that keep Iraqis hungry and medically deprived, but Saddam. The sanctions have been carefully devised to provide all necessary food and medicines. Saddam has diverted as much as he can for his military projects. The UN Sanctions Committee has vetoed only chemicals and material falsely labelled as medical supplies but destined for military usage. Saddam has spent and still spends millions to smuggle in military material. He could easily provide all his people's needs, had they not already been available under sanctions.

Sanctions are neither illegal nor immoral; Saddam is, and his weaponry and use of it are both. He used it to wipe out the Marsh Arabs in southern Iraq and his opponents elsewhere.

Your Iraqi academics ask for "a new strategy aimed at helping the Iraqi people to induce real change in Iraq". Can they suggest what is needed?
I A SHAPIRO
Birmingham

Sir: Would all the critics of the action taken against Saddam Hussein please come up with a better solution? I still see in my mind's eye the bloated corpses of women, children and men gassed because they were Kurds.
VIVIANE HASELUP
Burwash, East Sussex

Sir: We could consider doing what we have done with another equally odious type, in Indonesia. That is, we could supply him with ethical bombing aircraft and water cannon and in due course invite him to the annual sale of weapons by our own MoD. Oh, and in case he is not able to pay for them, we could pass the bill to the British taxpayer.
HOWARD CHENEY
Shipston on Stour, Warwickshire

Sir: What message of condolence do ministers plan to send to families of the bereaved in Iraq? Even suffering under the brutality of Saddam's inhuman regime is surely better than being killed or maimed for life by British or US bombs.

Let us not forget that this country and our weapons industries armed the brutal dictatorship of Saddam Hussein in the first place, as the Scott Inquiry laid bare. And not a single Tory minister found it necessary to resign over it.
Dr DAVID LOWRY
Stoneleigh, Surrey

Sir: Having just read about Britain's latest policy towards Iraq, I suggest that Tony Blair commission a new "tough and tender" bomb. Such a bomb would carry food and medicines as well as the more traditional destructive warhead. Both the humanitarian and the military destinations would be programmed into the missile, which could then make a detour around any local hospitals

of evil, which may well result in this particular Lord being prejudiced against the General's case. "Obviously," says a lawyer acting for General Pinochet, "anyone who has been involved with Christianity is bound to be prejudiced, and should declare their interest beforehand. As Pinochet is perhaps the most evil man left alive, then Christian bias in favour of goodness will prevent any justice being done." This is a farce from beginning to end. I demand that the General be tried by fellow torturers and murderers. Only then will we get a fair result.

2. At the time of going to press, Richard Branson's attempt to go round the world by balloon is still on, which means he will probably be up in a balloon on Christmas Day. Wherever he lands at this time, Branson is ready for the eventuality, as he has with him in the balloon a full Father Christmas costume into which he will change prior to getting out with a bag of toys. The gesture may well fall flat if he lands in an Islamic country, but he says that Virgin flights have always offered good in-flight entertainment, and this one should be no different.

3. Legal history is being made on a major daily paper, where the newspaper's lawyer is suing a journalist who actually works for the same paper. Apparently, one of the regular columnists wrote a piece attacking the quality of legal advisers on newspapers, saying

or children's homes on the way to its final destination.

An emergency do-it-yourself medical facility could be added (with instructions in Arabic) for any unfortunate victim of collateral damage. In this way the "tough and tender" bomb would accurately target its intended recipients in addition to fostering the spirit of self-help.

The bomb would not only encapsulate the principles of this government but could also provide valuable export revenue if properly marketed.

I hope the powers that be are listening.
ANDREW BYNG-HALL
Teddington, Middlesex

School teamwork

Sir: This morning (3 December) Messrs Blair and Blunkett came to Chiswick Community School in order to stimulate public interest in the Green Paper on Education to be presented to Parliament later in the day.

Although we recognise it as a compliment to the management and teaching teams of this school that it was selected as the launch pad for this event, we, the undersigned members of the teaching staff, wish to dissociate ourselves from the proposals in the Green Paper. We are strongly opposed to performance-related pay.

Successful teaching depends on teamwork both within a school and between schools. We consider therefore that any attempt to reward teachers in some schools more generously than in others, or individual teachers in the same school more than their colleagues, would be extremely divisive.

We urge the Government to rethink these retrogressive proposals and to take on board the views of classroom teachers.
CAROL MACDOUGALL
and 25 others
Chiswick Community School
London W4

Sir: Please could I put the record straight following the mention of Peter Lampl and the Sutton Trust in the article "Gates joins the great US giveaway" (4 December 1998).

The article mentioned that "prep schools would be given £40m by the Sutton Trust". In fact, the trust proposes to provide sufficient financial support to one or more of the leading academic private secondary schools (which were previously direct grant or grammar schools) so that they are able to take any child based on merit irrespective of the family's ability to pay. The character of the school would change as they became institutions for the most talented regardless of parental wealth and there would be no limit on the number of funded places.

The figure £40m for 14 years has appeared in the press but in reality the trust is still in the discussion stage with schools and has not yet established the cost of the pilot schemes.

Meanwhile we are spending significant sums of money on university summer schools and private/state school partnership schemes. But there are limits to what any individual can do. Please could we appeal through your columns for other foundations, entrepreneurs and businesses to join us in opening up the leading private schools to talented children regardless of their families' means?
LAURA BARBOUR
Administrator
The Sutton Trust
London SW1

A gap in the NHS

Sir: One of the main aims of dentists is to preserve teeth, contrary to the claims in Jeremy Laurance's article, "Dentists who drill for gold" (15 December). Indeed, the implication of the headline is many years out of date. Filling teeth will always be a last resort, but it is often the only way of preserving a tooth. The success dentists have had in preventing tooth decay and preserving teeth has meant that, unlike 30 years ago, people can now expect to keep their teeth for life.

The British Dental Association is very concerned that there is a shortage of NHS dentists and has been lobbying government and MPs to improve access to NHS dentistry. It is government underfunding of NHS dentistry over many years which has left many patients without an NHS dentist. Dentists do not leave the NHS for ideological reasons but

because they are struggling to cover their overheads, which amount to 55 per cent of their income. Despite its pledge that the NHS will be there when people need it, the Government is not taking sufficient action to ensure that this is true of dentistry. It has failed to release £12m it has promised to improve access problems.

Most patients are happy with their dental treatment. A Harris poll carried out only this month found that nine out of ten people are happy with the care and treatment they receive from their dentist.
JOHN HUNT
Chief Executive
British Dental Association
London W1

Talking divorce

Sir: Your report "Legal reform plan" will add to acrimony of divorce" (15 December) gives the impression that divorces will become more acrimonious as a result of the proposed legal aid reforms. It may be worth pointing out that there is an emphasis in mediation throughout the Lord Chancellor's paper *Modernising Justice*, which mediators will welcome.

In the field of divorce, the value

of mediation is enshrined in the Family Law Act. It is obviously sensible that, wherever possible and appropriate, parents talk through and decide together the future practical and financial arrangements for their children, with whom they both, in most instances, will have a continuing relationship. The Legal Aid Board is working with the UK College of Family Mediators and other mediation bodies, such as National Family Mediation, to make legal aid available for family mediation in preparation for the implementation of the Family Law Act.

Using conditional fees for property disputes ought not, whatever its pros and cons, to affect those eligible for legal aid who choose mediation, as they would not be seeking to resolve matters by litigation.
THELMA FISHER
Director
National Family Mediation
London WC1

Cheap drugs here

Sir: Having just returned from medical work in Nepal, I am intrigued by the Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry's statement that "the pharmaceutical industry in the UK is highly competitive especially in terms of prices" ("Price war at the pharmacy", 16 December).

Most of the drugs available in Nepal are manufactured in India and their efficacy in clinical practice I have found to be the same as their UK equivalents but the price is about one-tenth to one-twentieth of the UK price. Any argument about research and development costs can hardly apply to such humble drugs as paracetamol. The ABPI may be highly competitive within the UK, but the NHS drugs bill could be greatly reduced by purchasing further afield, and with benefit to the ailing Asian economy.
Dr DAVID J HILL
Huntingdon
Cambridgeshire

The role of Amnesty

Sir: When I was an active supporter of Amnesty, I used to say that we stood for free speech and fair trials and against torture and capital punishment. Remembering that I keep having to remind myself that Baroness Thatcher is perfectly entitled not to be punished for her views on General Pinochet. It would also follow that, in the controversy surrounding Lord Hoffmann, Amnesty should support the Law Lords' decision to have a second hearing. Even General Pinochet deserves a fair trial, whatever he might have done.

But I don't remember ever thinking it was Amnesty's role to prosecute human rights offenders itself. Rather than the Law Lords rethinking their involvement in Amnesty, perhaps it is Amnesty that needs to rethink its role. To take sides in any dispute just detracts from Amnesty's ability to be an impartial monitor of basic human rights across the world. We need that far more than we need another prosecution service.
RICHARD MANN
Oxford

Sir: Can I assume that when the Pinochet case goes back to the House of Lords, no members of an organisation that has lobbied vigorously for him will be allowed to judge his case? I am referring, of course, to the Conservative Party.
ANDREW KEMBALL
Coggeshall, Essex

Our children's care

Sir: While welcoming the Government's determination to try and ensure a cohesive approach to the delivery of care and services for adults suffering from mental illness (report, 9 December), we would like to see the same approach being adopted for children. A brief look at the number of major reports produced in the last 12 years, including those of the Health Select Committee, highlighting the urgent need to improve child and adolescent mental health services and ways in which this should happen, gives little cause to feel confident that the initiatives referred to in "Modernising Mental Health Services", aimed at improving children's mental health, will achieve what they are set up to do.

Programmes such as Sure Start and Youth Offending Teams depend in part for their success on close co-operation with services which already operate with unacceptably long waiting lists. And yet these are the services which have the potential to intervene in the depressingly familiar descent by disturbed children and young people into the adult mentally ill, about whom there is rightly so much concern. For example, 90 per cent of recidivist juvenile delinquents had conduct disorder as children. The manifestation of this in adults can be anti-social personality disorder, alcoholism and drug dependence.

Children's mental health needs are different to those of adults, and services are fundamentally different in their approach. We risk losing sight yet again of children's mental health needs if we bury them in a service which is at heart adult-focused.
PETER WILSON
Director, Young Minds
London EC1

New road menace

Sir: I am encouraged to learn that, despite the continuing shortfall in manpower and other resources, the police forces of the United Kingdom are still able quickly to identify and target new threats to our society ("Police target cars at random", 16 December).

However, the nature of the threat "born-again bikers" pose is not clear: are they to be charged with looking faintly ridiculous ("Having middle-aged spread unbecoming to a very smart motorcycle") or merely with having fantasies about how they should have behaved during their youth?
Dr D J BARBARA
Wellesbourne, Warwickshire

Here's all the false news that's totally unfit to print

HOW WELL do you keep up with the news? Think you're in touch with what is happening? Think you could hold your own on the *News Quiz* or *Have I Got News For You*? Well, here's your chance to find out!

All you have to do is read the following half dozen news stories taken from the last seven days, and decide which are true and which have been made up specially for this quiz.

1. The case for General Pinochet's extradition to Spain has been made even more difficult now that it emerges that one of the Law Lords who voted in favour of extradition is a practising Christian. Apparently people who believe in Christianity and its creed are against torture and violence and all sorts

of evil, which may well result in this particular Lord being prejudiced against the General's case.

"Obviously," says a lawyer acting for General Pinochet, "anyone who has been involved with Christianity is bound to be prejudiced, and should declare their interest beforehand. As Pinochet is perhaps the most evil man left alive, then Christian bias in favour of goodness will prevent any justice being done." This is a farce from beginning to end. I demand that the General be tried by fellow torturers and murderers. Only then will we get a fair result.

2. At the time of going to press, Richard Branson's attempt to go round the world by balloon is still on, which means he will probably

be up in a balloon on Christmas Day. Wherever he lands at this time, Branson is ready for the eventuality, as he has with him in the balloon a full Father Christmas costume into which he will change prior to getting out with a bag of toys. The gesture may well fall flat if he lands in an Islamic country, but he says that Virgin flights have always offered good in-flight entertainment, and this one should be no different.

3. Legal history is being made on a major daily paper, where the newspaper's lawyer is suing a journalist who actually works for the same paper. Apparently, one of the regular columnists wrote a piece attacking the quality of legal advisers on newspapers, saying



MILES KINGDON
'I demand that the General be tried by fellow torturers, then we will get a fair result'

that, in his experience, only the very poorest and least efficient lawyers ever sank so low as to work

for a newspaper. This rankled with the paper's lawyer, who has now sued the columnist for libel.

The columnist is claiming in his defence that if the article is libellous, the lawyer should never have let it appear, thus proving his case that he is indeed an incompetent lawyer. The case continues.

4. After the wind-up radio and the wind-up torch, a firm in Nigeria is now selling the world's first wind-up computer for use by people who have no access to mains electricity, or cannot afford batteries. It has to be wound up every 10 minutes to prevent files being lost.

5. A child in the US is suing his own parents for telling him that Father

Christmas exists, on the grounds that they were instilling a palpable falsehood in his mind.

He claims that the distress caused by his eventual discovery that Father Christmas does not exist, plus the scorn and humiliation heaped on him by his classmates who already knew the truth, has caused him unreasonable mental suffering which they could have avoided by telling him the truth in the first place.

The parents are claiming in mitigation that they really thought Father Christmas existed, and they are counter-suing their son for being the first person to tell them the truth.

6. Police could scarcely believe their eyes when they saw a small

saloon car take a humpbacked bridge in Norfolk going at about 25 mph, and become airborne the other side for about 20ft. They followed the car and arrested the driver - Jack Broughton - for speeding, the only charge they could think of.

The driver then revealed that he had been experimenting with super-helium-filled wheels which made the car lighter, though not, normally, lighter than air. Police have decided to not proceed with speeding charges, but to prosecute the driver instead for dangerous low flying.

ANSWER: All of these stories are false, except the one about Alan Clark MP General Pinochet and the Chilean judge's twin daughters.

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The Prime Minister has misjudged the mood of the nation

FOR ALL the Prime Minister's confident nationalism, he has not emerged strengthened from his Iraqi venture. Ministers boasting at the start of the bombing of how loyal they were to United Nations resolutions and the "special relationship" with the US have now changed tack to promote a "diplomatic initiative" to contain Saddam Hussein.

The Government seems to have misjudged the national mood and, for the first time, Mr Blair himself has stumbled badly in his handling of public opinion. He was met by no jingoistic rhetoric in Parliament, and little groundswell of feeling among the electorate; even what bombast there was in the tabloid press seemed strained and overblown. At times last week, the Prime Minister seemed to be using British service personnel as human shields for deflecting criticism; thus he damaged the caring image he has skillfully fostered in domestic affairs.

Ministers can now claim that they have put back by a year or two Saddam's capability to build weapons of mass destruction. They can argue that the Iraqi leader having been humiliated, it will be easier to contain him by diplomatic means. Their case appears a little threadbare. They seem to be engaged in cobbling together a desperate response to domestic and international criticism of their actions, shocked at the extent of opposition they have encountered both at home and abroad.

They have a lot to reconsider. Britain's relations with her European neighbours have been harmed; they have been given the impression that this country will follow US actions without a second thought. Arab nations already struggling to contain internal dissent have been further destabilised. Even the fragile peace process in Israel has been thrown further into doubt. The attempts of the Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, to build a new diplomatic "consensus" in the Middle East are a tacit admission of this.

Mr Blair's latest action, to send a British aircraft carrier steaming towards the Gulf, is no way to begin this process.

What a new "consensus" in fact demands is that further actions are not only legal and proportionate, but are seen to be so. The UN Security Council should be consulted over further military action. If only to avoid our further isolation. Sanctions will need to be reconsidered, as they seem to have done nothing to weaken the Ba'ath regime in Iraq, and have gained it more sympathy than anything else.

In the long term, the Western powers should promote democracy in Iraq and throughout the region, instead of hoping for a more pliant strongman to emerge from within the Iraqi military. The real way to contain Saddam is to maintain support in the West for action against him, and to persuade those Arabs who may despair of our motives, and see Saddam as our victim, that we are acting fairly.



China's one-party state is alive and kicking

IF EVER there were a good example of the continuing relevance of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights 50 years after its inception, it is the decision of a Chinese court to sentence opponents of the regime to more than a decade in prison for "subverting state power".

Those convicted had committed the so-called crime of attempting to register a new political grouping, the Chinese Democracy Party, a freedom to which they are fully entitled. They were denied access to legal representation. Their punishment is an affront to natural justice.

The action dashes hopes that the Chinese government had itself raised. For the last two years, it had seemed to be making progress towards a democratic future. After the horrors of Tiananmen Square, there was talk of a "Peking

spring", a new openness to, and tolerance of, dissent.

The Chinese government has made several welcome gestures, including signing up to UN treaties on civil and political rights. The UN Special Commissioner on Human Rights, Mary Robinson, was met with courtesy on her visit in September; an annual motion at the UN criticising China's human rights record was dropped accordingly.

There has undoubtedly been progress made in the liberalisation of China, not least in the field of the criminal law, as witnessed by the British Prime Minister and his wife on their recent trip to China. The Communist Party's grip on legal training has been loosened; trials have been made more public.

This is all a long way from the madness of the Cultural Revolution, in which millions died. It is increasingly difficult for the Chinese state to maintain a monopoly on news. Internet sites beyond the reach of the authorities are being utilised to mobilise dissent. Expectations are rising. The economy is liberalising, and citizens with an increasing

stake in business enterprise are demanding more information about those in charge. Debate has been sparked about "corruption", coded criticism of the ruling elite.

This is why the jailing of these two activists is such a disappointment, an attack on some of the best and brightest Chinese citizens. One of their number, Xu Wenli, has already spent 12 years in prison for his principles. His continued defiance is a testament to his courage. There may be few results from attempting to face down his captors, but the West cannot abandon him and his peers. They must know that they have our moral and political support.

While China has been making concessions to civil rights, political rights are as distant as ever. The one-party state is alive and well - a further embarrassment to the Prime Minister's foreign policy, given his praise of China during his recent visit. Tibet remains occupied. Freedom of speech and political organisation, both fundamental to the Declaration of Human Rights, remain curtailed. Until that changes, China's reforms will remain cosmetic.

Unfortunately, there really was no alternative to bombing Iraq

EVER SINCE Wednesday night when it began, I have been listening and watching, trying to work out what I think about the Anglo-American bombing of Iraq. Perhaps many readers have, too. Like me, they may find the easy certainty that lots of commentators wear snugly, like soft armour, impossible for them to put on; that it irritates the intellect.

I do not like bombs and I distrust the insouciance of the military about the effects and accuracy of their fabulous weapons. The lies that were told about the American war in Vietnam, the false pretences that were invented for escalating the conflict, the hidden bombing of neutral countries, the murderous euphemisms and the utter futility of the whole exercise have left a deep distrust of the Pentagon and all its works. In the 1991 Gulf war we heard a deal too much techno bombast about destroyed Scuds that weren't and smart bombs that turned out to be dumb.

But for every armchair military enthusiast, looking at the world through his or her telescopic crosshairs, there seems - especially within the liberal establishment - to be a foreign affairs genius who, "nauseated" by the policy of the Government, is certain that the bombings were an attempt to save Clinton's flushed hide, with Tony Blair acting as the poodle of the Yanks.


These are the people who think that *Wag the Dog*, the film in which a US president declares a war so as to cover up an affair, is actually true. They probably also believe, *pace The Truman Show*, that their own lives are being

secretly filmed as part of a TV soap opera. They tend to regret the tardiness of firm "action" in Rwanda, Bosnia, Kosovo and anywhere else that pricks the conscience, but are heartily opposed to the action that is being taken in the Gulf.

The best reason, of course, for not seeking to enforce UN resolutions on Iraq would be because Iraq was simply not the threat we have made it out to be. As far as I know there is only one British politician who openly argues this, though others surely believe it (I would, for instance, like to bear George Galloway on the subject). Tam Dalyell, that plucky, obsessive MP, recently met Tariq Aziz and left convinced by the urbane Iraqi's assurances that his country barely had two toxins to rub together. It had all gone, honest. On balance, said Mr Dalyell, he would rather believe Mr Aziz than UN inspectors.

This is both a brave stance and an incredibly stupid one. Mr Aziz was at Saddam Hussein's side when Iran was invaded in 1980, when Kuwait was overrun in 1990, when the Kurds of Halabja were gassed, when every opposition Tom, Dick and Ali was being shot, banged or poisoned. It all never happened, according to Mr Aziz, whose role has been to persuade the gullible outsider that the Iraqi regime is misunderstood. He is the Ribbentrop of the Euphrates, a smooth liar in a monstrous cause.

Let us presume then, even if Tam will not, that Saddam continues to be a threat because of two proven factors: his extreme bellicosity and his willingness to use any weapons that be



DAVID AARONOVITCH
The alternative is to sit and watch the French rearm the almost uniquely dangerous Saddam

can make or buy, no matter how nasty they are. What should we do about him? On Thursday that question was put to a furious Tony Benn. The (unedited) exchange went like this, according to Hansard: Mr Christopher Leslie (Shipley): What credible alternative strategy does my Rt Hon Friend offer for disarming Saddam Hussein? Mr Benn: I ask my Hon Friend to consider this: if one does something illegal, it is no good saying, "Well, what else could I do?" It is an illegal action. The answer is simple: the sanctions should be lifted. I am asked to believe the Prime Minister, but the imposition of sanctions has not stopped Saddam re-arming.

Mr Dale Campbell-Savours (Workington): How will that stop Saddam? Mr Benn: Sanctions have not had any

effect except on the Iraqi people. [Interruption] Please do not shout at me, I am entitled to make my case. I have listened to my Hon Friend the member for Workington and I shall be sorry when he leaves the House. The world community agrees unanimously that the sanctions are a grave injustice that affect innocent people.

AND THAT was it. He then got back down to telling everyone what shits they were. It was a telling moment because it revealed that Mr Benn had absolutely no idea what to do about Iraq. Those, by and large, who have criticised the bombing so trenchantly in print and on air have no notion either. And, unlike in 1990, they are now also opposed to sanctions, which they (rightly) see as having affected Iraqi civilians in an appalling way.

On Sunday, President Chirac of France also called for the sanctions to be relaxed on humanitarian grounds. The French rationale seems to be that sanctions are bolstering, rather than undermining, the Iraqi government. The hope is that a relaxation will allow the fermentation of opposition to the dictator and facilitate his removal.

Like most other people, I feel some natural sympathy with this view. I do not care to be the agent of death among the medicine-deprived tots of Basra, and am wondering whether Saddam will ever be brought down by the current Western strategy. But those who blithely advocate the lifting of many sanctions should also confront the dangers. While we wait for the Iraqi elite to get on with it and

machine-gun Saddam in some dusty Baghdad courtyard, he will still be there, and with more money to spend. So far, for all its faults, the post-Gulf war settlement has prevented the most aggressive tyrant in the Middle East from making war.

The corollary, then, to the relaxation of sanctions, must be an increased "rather than a diminished" willingness to use force should the Iraqis begin a weapons build-up. In other words, we would be more "not less" likely to have to send in the planes at the first signs of enhanced weapons production. That could be why, right now, we're sending more planes and ships there. And we'll also want (I presume) to increase our use of covert operations to support the Iraqi opposition, though which of the 57 varieties we will back is a rather fraught question.

There are two alternatives to this new low-sanction, high-military, encourage-the-opposition strategy. The first is the one that some Tories appear to be canvassing, and that is a land-based invasion of Iraq, the removal of Saddam and (in some of the more ingenious variations) the division of the country into three separate states. This, as even Michael Howard knows - his impatient bluster about a "get-rid-of-Saddam" objective notwithstanding - could be a complete diplomatic disaster.

The second is that we do nothing. We sit and we watch until the enlightened French have rearmed Iraq and until the almost uniquely dangerous Saddam (or successors) do it to us again. I just don't think that that's a good idea.

QUOTE OF THE DAY
"It will be a remarkable feat if all the babies do survive."
Dr Brian Kirshon,
who delivered the Texan octuplets

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY
"Never murder a man who is committing suicide."
Woodrow Wilson,
US statesman

"If I couldn't come here at Christmas, I don't know where I'd go"

Without a Crisis shelter to go to, Linda would face a cold, lonely Christmas of hunger and misery. Instead, she is welcomed with good, hot food, a safe, dry bed and the pleasure of friendly people to spend Christmas with. Some medical care, a visit to the dentist and a clean change of clothes makes her Christmas complete. So please, send £25 now and help us make sure Linda has a safe, happy Christmas.

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WE PERSONALLY favor a bipartisan resolution of censure by the Senate. Under such a plan, President Clinton would have to accept rebuke while acknowledging his wrongdoing and the very real harm he has caused. The Congressional resolution should contain language stipulating that the President's acceptance of these findings - including a public acknowledgment that he did not tell the truth under oath - cannot be used in any

future criminal trial to which he may be subject. (Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter)
The New York Times

THE FASTER the Southern Republicans rush to dump Clinton, the greater his popularity will be among African Americans. Many blacks see impeachment as a thinly disguised attempt to hammer the President for acting and speaking out on black causes, and as a backdoor power grab

for the White House in the year 2000 - and they're right. But as long as Southern Republicans control such a huge bloc of Congressional votes, they believe that impeachment is the civil war they can win. (Earl Ofari Hutchinson)
Los Angeles Times

IT WAS an earlier Democratic President, Andrew Jackson, who once told Congress that, while it was free to censure its own members, it had no right to censure the head of another, co-equal, branch of government. When he was censured, Old Hickory dared the Whigs to impeach him so he could defend himself at trial like a man. Now we have a Democratic President who wants Congress to censure him, pretty please, so he can avoid trial. Yes, surreal. Is this the Republic of Jefferson and Jackson, of

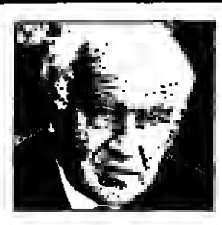
Washington and Hamilton, or of P.T. Barnum and Bill Clinton?
Arkansas Democrat-Gazette

THE NATION will not be best served by a Senate conviction, but, whatever is to be done, "then" were well "I" were done quickly", as Macbeth said about the disposition of another leader. As for censure, nothing could be more censorious than impeachment, with which Clinton's name will be forever linked.
The Boston Globe

Do the Iraqis like our gifts, Daddy?

father, daughter
nobility, and, of course,
one of the most visible
Disney has ever made
West End: Odeon
Mezzanine, Odeon
Virgin Chelsea

From Johnson to Clinton



GODFREY HODGSON

Never has the United States' political system been more hell-bent on self-destruction

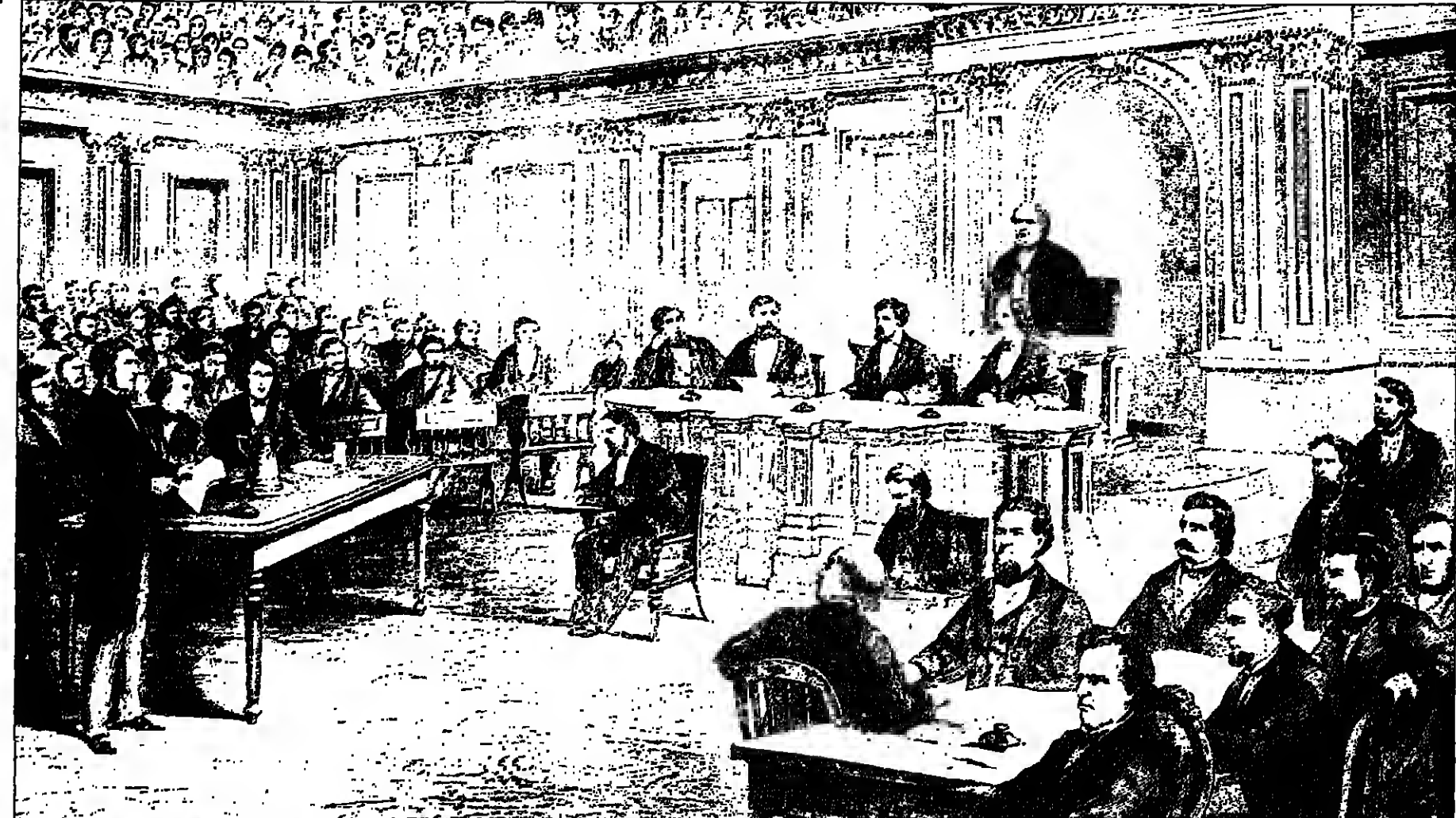
ONLY A fool would try to predict the outcome of President Clinton's trial by the Senate, which will start in the New Year. All that can sensibly be said is that, if time and time again the President has made a comeback, time and again his relentless Republican pursuers have gone after him and prevented him escaping into the long grass.

Whatever happens, the President's impeachment is a crisis for American government and society of the first magnitude. It is both dramatic evidence of how bitter American politics has become and an ominous indication of how divisions are likely to deepen. Historically, the civil rights legislation of the Sixties destroyed the Democratic coalition of northern liberals and southern conservatives, leaving the two sides ideologically divided as never before.

This is not, as one London tabloid called it, a "sex trial". It is a grave constitutional crisis and it will turn not on the American public's attitude to sexual morality but on the Senate's judgment about whether the President perjured himself and abused his oath of office.

When the Senate sits on the impeachment resolutions, its presiding officer will be the Chief Justice, William Rehnquist. That is not good news for President Clinton, for Rehnquist is an ultra-conservative, originally a supporter of Senator Barry Goldwater, who ran unsuccessfully for the White House as a conservative in 1964, and a nominee and supporter of Richard Nixon, who resigned rather than face impeachment in 1974.

As it happens, the Chief Justice published in 1992 a scholarly study of the impeachment process and, in particular, of the impeachment trials of Chief Justice Samuel Chase in 1805 and President Andrew Johnson in 1868. In his book Rehnquist makes some points about the Nixon case that have ironic resonances today. He points out that, in 1974, members of the House of Representatives judiciary committee (the majority of course, then Democrats) rejected the view advanced today by the Democrats in Clinton's defence that the "high crimes and misdemeanours" for which, according to the constitution, a president can be removed must be indictable offences under criminal law.



The impeachment hearings of President Andrew Johnson in the Senate Chambers in 1868

But he makes a very interesting point about the Chase and Johnson impeachments. In each case, Rehnquist points out, impeachment followed a period when a victorious party, having at last achieved power in Congress, found itself frustrated by a chief justice or a president. In 1805 it was the Jefferson Republicans (ancestors of today's Democrats), who worked off their frustration on the Federalist Chase.

In 1868 it was the radical Republicans who, having won the Civil War and emancipated the slaves, wanted to push through a radical "Reconstruction" of the defeated southern states and found themselves frustrated by the conservative (and southern) Johnson. The immediate issue was Johnson's sacking of his Secretary of War as a response to the radical Republicans' Tenure of Office Act; the underlying issue was the Republicans' wish to give the vote to the newly freed blacks in the South.

Johnson survived, by a single vote, in the most melodramatic circumstances imaginable. The decisive vote came from a dying senator, carried into the chamber on a couch. In reality, Johnson survived because half a dozen moderate Republicans, troubled by the reckless enthusiasm of Thaddeus Stevens, Ben Butler and the

other radicals, voted for acquittal. The key to what is happening in Washington now is again the rage and frustration felt by the activist conservative Republicans because they think they are being robbed of the fruits of their victory. They thought there had been a Reagan Revolution, with the liberals co-opted and conservatives in the saddle for the next generation at least. Then they had to put up with George Bush, just the kind of moderate Republican they dislike more even than liberals.

In 1994 they offered their "Contract with America" and won a smashing victory under Newt Gingrich, capturing both houses of Congress for the first time for two generations - only to see Bill Clinton pop up again in 1996. They managed to get an arch conservative, Kenneth Starr, appointed as special prosecutor to investigate first the Clintons' financial dealings in Arkansas, and then anything that might be thrown at them. But, after spending \$40m, Starr came up with nothing.

Clinton won the 1996 election. Imagine the congressional Republicans' thrill when they learned that their enemy had not only been recklessly meeting a white intern for sexual trysts in the White House but had been foolish enough to lie on oath, and on television, about it. Clinton repeated his lie and was

caught out, in part thanks to unscrupulous prosecutorial manoeuvres by Starr and his bloodhounds. Once again the radical Republicans thought they had got their man, and once again, in the mid-term elections last month, he slipped away.

The strain has been telling on the Republicans. Newt Gingrich survived a clumsy, abortive coup last July, only to be forced to resign after the party's poor performance in November. Now his successor, Robert Livingston, has resigned after admitting that he, too, had strayed from the marriage bed. To lose two speakers in a month argues a certain carelessness, or a certain desperation. But they closed ranks, voted the straight party line and pushed through impeachment.

What happens now? There are 55 Republicans in the Senate and only 45 Democrats. But conviction on an impeachment requires a two-thirds vote. On the face of it, that would seem to mean that the Republicans are unlikely to get the 67 votes they need, apart from anything else, they cannot be sure of every last Republican senator's vote.

Nothing that has happened since the Lewinsky scandal first broke, however, encourages confidence. Linear prediction. The Senate trial will be the focus of the most intense media feeding frenzy that is imaginable. The Republicans are desperate not to see their prey escape

yet again. The Democrats, however, are not so united.

Public support for President Clinton remains at a high level and has even risen since he was impeached. But conservative Republicans are not as interested in public opinion as they are in the wishes of their ideologically passionate activists and financial backers.

There has been much talk in Washington of deals, and plea-bargaining comes naturally to American lawyers, which is what many members of the Senate are. In theory, the Senate can do what it likes. It can decide, by a simple majority vote, not to proceed with the trial. It can decide whether or not to hear witnesses and if so whether to hear them in public or in camera.

The Senate could certainly vote to censure the President, with or without a fine, perhaps requiring him to sign his own condemnation. Censure, however, is what the President's defenders want, and for that reason alone it would feel like yet another humiliating frustration for his pursuers.

My own hunch is that the debate in the Senate will go the whole way, and the final vote will not come before extraordinary dramas and manoeuvres. There are several influential Democratic senators who are outraged by the President's behaviour. They feel he has let them, their party and the country

down. Some or all of them might come out for impeachment. Or, at the last minute, they might orchestrate a movement for some compromise that could not be dismissed as a slap on the wrist - though it is not easy to imagine what that could be.

So the next three months will see unprecedented passions and unanticipated events. It will all be great fun. It will also be bad news for the United States and therefore for the rest of us. Both the presidency and the Congress will emerge from the crisis, whatever happens, with their reputation damaged, and so in a sense will the American system.

Never has the US exerted more influence, even hegemony, than now; never has its domestic political system been more hell-bent on self-destruction. America is a strong society, and its institutions are tougher than they sometimes look. It remains to be seen how they will cope with the new media, for whom nothing is sacred, and with the new politics, by which angry ideologically conservative Republicans, slug it out with angry ideologically liberal Democrats, with the rules even rougher than they were for fighting in the old Arkansas river ports, where everything was allowed but for biting, gouging and bollocking.

Hamish McRae's weekly column will appear tomorrow

RIGHT OF REPLY

DR NICHOLAS TATE



The chief executive of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority replies to recent criticisms of the National Curriculum tests

IN THE early 1990s there were valid criticisms of the national tests. They focused on the reliability of the tests, the information they provided, and the possibility of cheating. However, problems in all these areas have been successfully tackled and criticisms along these lines are now outdated.

Each question in the tests is now rigorously pre-tested to pitch it at the correct level. So, too, are the papers, which are anchored to the previous year's standard. Radical changes to the tests are avoided, and any necessary changes are carefully piloted before introduction. The tests are now among the most carefully developed school exams in the world.

The tests provide far more detailed information than simply a test mark. All papers are sent back to the schools after marking, so that teachers can see exactly where mistakes were made. The QCA analyses the completed papers, and publishes a report setting out strengths and weaknesses of performance.

As for cheating, schools are not allowed to open test paper packs until an hour before the test starts. During the test, random schools received an unscheduled visit to check administration arrangements; in only a few cases was there evidence of malpractice.

The tests are making a major contribution to improving the quality of education. They may not measure everything that is worth learning, but they are a measure of progress in the core curriculum elements. They provide diagnostic information; they hold schools accountable; they enable us to set targets. One of the main levers in the crusade to raise levels of achievement, they are here to stay.

Animal rights: time to talk turkey

THIS IS the time of year when we are reminded that dogs aren't for Christmas, they are for life; to which I recall laconic Alexei Sayle responding: "We usually have a turkey round our place, actually." After the hunger strike by the campaigner, Barry Horne, and huge rows over vivisection and "animal rights", it is interesting to find in Stephen Budiansky a writer who emphatically will not stick up for the fluffy bunnies - at least, not if you want to suggest to him that they have thoughts, memories and intelligence that resemble ours.

In the 19th century, the Prussian horse "Clever Hans", it was claimed, was able to do maths by tapping the answer to multiple-choice questions with a hoof. Its reward was a sugar lump. However, investigators found



TUESDAY BOOK

IF A LION COULD TALK: HOW ANIMALS THINK

BY STEPHEN BUDIANSKY, WEIDENFELD & NICOLSON, £20

that if the people watching didn't know the answer to the question, Hans got it wrong. The smart horse was reacting to tiny changes in the observers' reactions as it reached the correct answer. So was Hans just a stupid horse? One could argue that it was really very clever to spot a piece of body language that none of the humans had noticed.

Budiansky, shortlisted twice for the Rhone-Poulenc science-writing

prizes, wants to examine what animals experience in their "consciousness" and what intelligence means. The book's title is taken from Wittgenstein, who said: "If a lion could talk, we would not understand him." Budiansky argues that if a lion could talk, we could understand him fine - but its "mind would no longer be a lion's mind".

Everyone - even scientists - does want animals to "talk". Rather than observing horses as herd animals well adapted to open grasslands, we want them to play the mathematical games we would demand from children. Rather than trying to see what makes chimpanzees unique, we want to teach some of them American sign language so we can feel gratified at how many words and simple "sentences" they can produce.

Even when describing such tests, language gets in the way. "The monkey went to the food" contains an undercurrent of intentionality that may be lacking in the animal. Even amoebae can direct themselves towards food sources. At what level of the evolutionary ladder should we say that simple response ends and intention begins?

The truth is that every animal has been equipped with that ultimate school of hard knocks, evolution, to deal as best it can with its environment - though all have ideal niches, determined by selection. Being among a bunch of twitching 19th century humans who offer sugar lumps for picking up subtle indications of movement is not a horse's ideal spot, but it will do its best. But it is not doing, and



Learning sign language is not what makes chimps unique Bill Rorem

never will do, mathematics. Budiansky manages the neat trick of drumming this into the reader's head without ever seeming to be preaching.

However, he also manages an equally valuable task. Although behavioural scientists are always taught about Clever Hans in their first seminar, the syllogism of "this is the answer, so that is the process by which the animal reached it" persists in modern research. Work with apes, chimpanzees, rats, mice, birds and worms all comes under sceptical inspection. Little passes the test. Budiansky wields Occam's razor like Sweeney Todd, slaughtering through sloppy thinking about what animals might be "capable" of and bringing high-flying results (such as the chimp that appears able to add numbers for a food reward) crashing to earth.

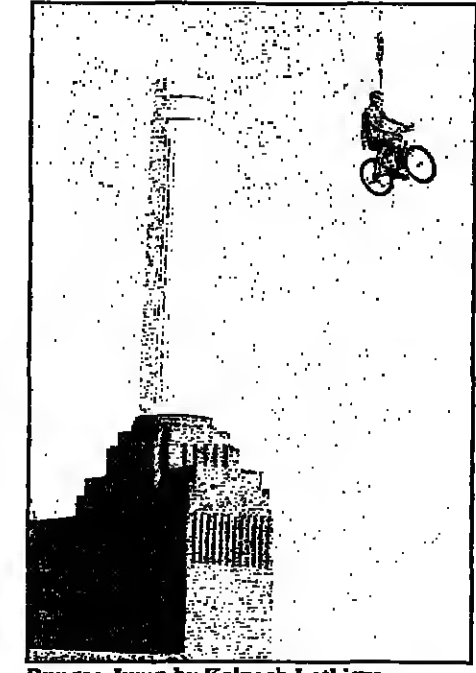
One could argue that scientists, too, are driven by similar logic, in that the simplest way to get your name on a big scientific paper with attendant rise in status is to achieve a "conscious-like" response from an animal. But what sets the scientist apart is that paper. Humans stand on the other side

of a Rubicon of evolution. Language separates us from all other species, a rocket that has allowed us to escape the gravitational pull of biological adaptation. Horses tap the ground for sugar, but only we worry about the possibility that we are being deceived. Language also takes us into that peculiar realm where we can pose ethical questions. Is it "right" to kill turkeys? What "rights" can turkeys have? Does our position confer special rights on us or on the animals mutely left on the other side of the divide? Budiansky evades this point, except to say: "We try so hard to show that chimpanzees or monkeys or dogs or cats or rats or chickens or fish or frogs are like us in their thoughts and feelings; in doing so we do nothing but denigrate what they really are."

Personally, I will have turkey for Christmas. I will also offer a gift of thanks to evolution, and especially language, which means that I'm not spending it on the savannahs, trying to avoid the attention of silent lions. Animals, after all, don't recognise human rights.

CHARLES ARTHUR

THE INDEPENDENT PHOTOGRAPH



Bungee Jump by Kalpesh Lathigra Ref: 00110

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Professor Nigel Holder

NIGEL HOLDER had recently become head of the Department of Anatomy and Developmental Biology at University College London, and was enjoying enormous success, when he died suddenly and left his family, friends and colleagues devastated.

He had started life as a biologist, but after graduating from King's College London in 1974, chose to do a PhD with me on limb development, focusing on the development of joints and bone formation, at the Middlesex Hospital Medical School.

He made the transition with great ease and then was awarded a Nato Postdoctoral Fellowship to work on limb regeneration at the University of California at Irvine. There he rapidly made significant contributions to the mechanisms by which the regeneration of the new limb is controlled.

It was characteristic of Holder's exceptional abilities to master new fields. When he returned to London in 1979 he was appointed Lecturer in Anatomy at King's College where he studied how nerve cells find their targets. He was soon promoted to a Readership and then became a Professor.

It was at King's that his imaginative organisational skills were put to particularly good effect. By persuading committee after committee he managed to set up a Developmental Biology Research Centre in Drury Lane.

The unit was a novel idea and brought together in an interdisciplinary environment a variety of different groups each with their own techniques; so there were those with a more classical approach to how the embryo develops - who thought mainly in terms of cells and how they signalled to each other and how they responded - interacting with those whose natural mode of thought was in terms of molecules. The centre was, and is, a great success.

Holder's own interests now moved towards analysing development using the techniques of genetics. He was one of the first in this country to begin to use the zebrafish as a model for such studies and he soon established himself as a leader of a major group studying how mutations could affect the development of the zebrafish embryo.

His reasons for choosing the zebrafish were not only because it had



He studied the zebrafish, because it had a short breeding cycle, but also because the embryo is transparent and so every cell can be followed under the microscope

a short breeding cycle and so made genetics possible, but also because the embryo is transparent and so the behaviour of every cell in the embryo can be followed under the microscope.

Holder was initially particularly interested in how the brain of the early embryo is patterned. He became increasingly convinced that a class of molecules known as ephrins play a vital role in signalling between cells during the development of the nervous system. More recently he discovered that they play a key role in the process whereby the embryo becomes segmented into blocks of tissue along its head to tail axis - blocks that later give rise to the vertebrae and body muscles.

Just 15 months ago Holder was appointed to his current position as head of department at UCL. This was a major commitment as it is a

very large and successful department. Holder had been diagnosed several years earlier as having vasculitis, an auto-immune disease affecting the blood vessels. At times the effects of the illness were severe but he never complained and stoically waited for each episode to pass.

There was every evidence that his doctors had found ways of controlling it, and he threw himself with enthusiasm into his new role. He built beautiful new aquaria for his fish and won support from many funding agencies to establish a large group of researchers.

He ran the department with a touch that gained him the affection and confidence of his colleagues. It also both amused and pleased him and me that he was now the boss of his former supervisor. Holder had friends in the scientific community throughout the world; he had a great talent for friendship. He loved paintings and music and had become an enthusiastic and moderately competent golfer.

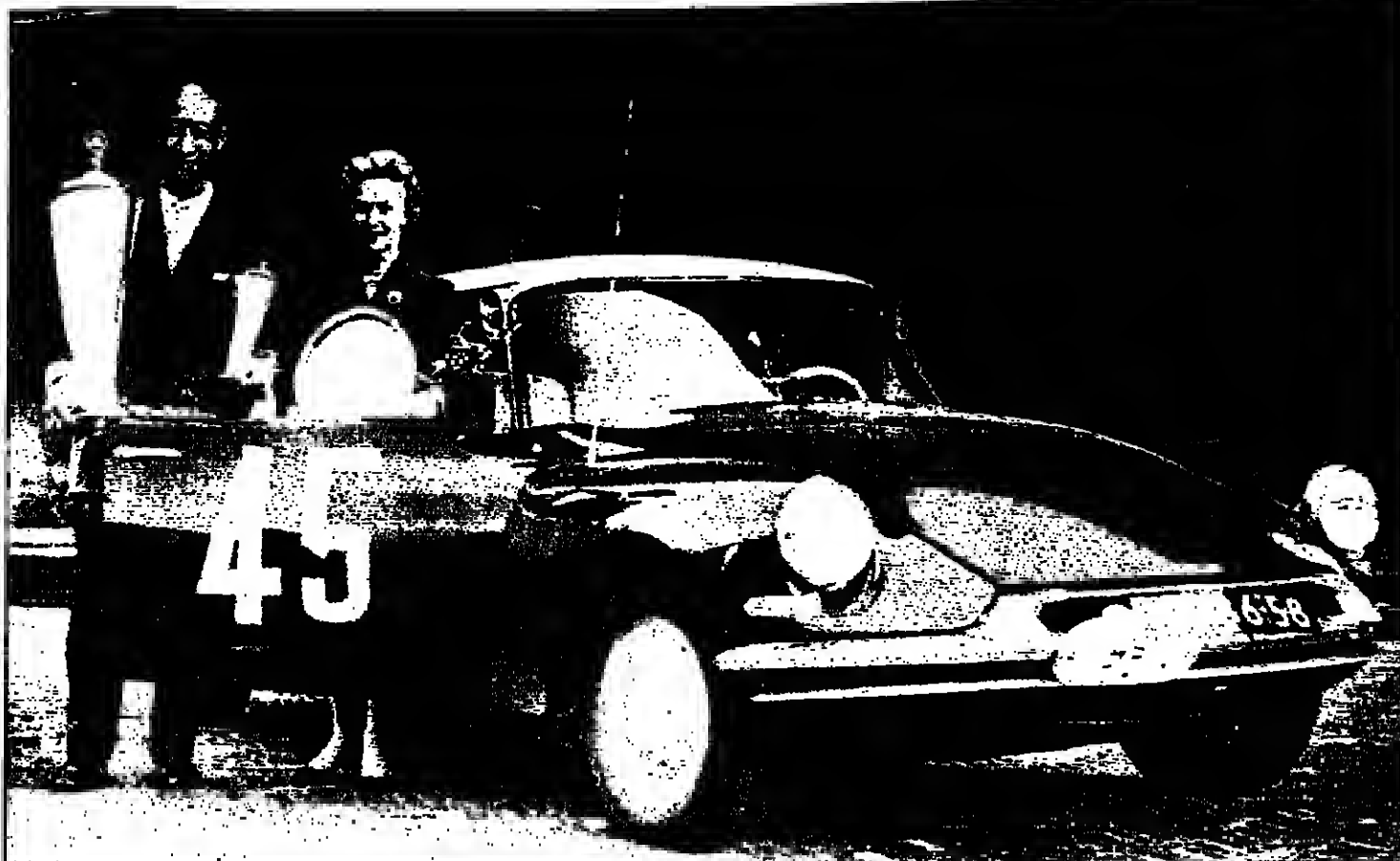
His research was going very well and he had just been awarded a new grant for half a million pounds for special equipment. He had just completed, with a German colleague, a very important review of the role of ephrins in development. He was also planning a major reconstruction of part of the building in order to establish a new Centre for Post-Genomic Research.

Holder realised that more and more, as the genome - the DNA - of humans and other organisms was worked out there would be the need to find out what all those genes were actually doing. His commitment to both science and the department was total.

But so too was his commitment to his family. He was particularly proud of his six-year-old son Daniel's poem that he had composed all on his own on a computer; he had brought Michael, his nine-day-old son, into the department on the very day that he died.

LEWIS WOLPERT

Nigel Henry Keith Holder, developmental biologist; born London 2 July 1933; Lecturer in Anatomy, Kings College London 1979-84, Reader 1984-93, Professor 1993-97; Head of Anatomy, University College London 1997-98; married 1990 Alison Fox (two sons); died London 11 December 1998.



Gatsonides after winning the Mobil Economy Run in a Citroën ID19 - he scored a hat-trick between 1964 and 1968

Maurice Gatsonides

IT IS taken for granted now that leading rally drivers are full-time professionals who make a handsome living from the sport. This was not the case between the wars and in the years just after the Second World War, when most rally drivers were keen amateurs who drove for the fun of it and were happy if a manufacturer provided a car for them and covered their expenses. Maurice Gatsonides deserves the credit for breaking the mould as he was probably the first full-time professional.

He was born in 1911 in Gombong, Java - in what was then the Dutch East Indies - where his diplomat father was posted. His parents then returned to Holland where he was educated. He joined KLM and qualified as a commercial pilot but left in 1935 to open a motor business near Haarlem.

An enthusiasm for motor sport led him to start rally driving. His first major event was the 1936 Monte Carlo Rally in which he drove a Hillman Minx. He began a long association with British cars. His first important success was in the 1939 Liège-Rome-Liège rally driving a Riley Kestrel; he finished fourth. This event was run in late August and there were fears that the war would start before the competitors had completed the course.

During the Second World War, Gatsonides built up a profitable business making charcoal gas generators which kept cars and commercial vehicles running in occupied Holland where there was

no petrol. This was a useful cover for his work in the Dutch resistance, helping escaped prisoners of war.

When the war ended he resumed his motor trading activities and also tried to become a car manufacturer at his garage at Heemstede. He built a car using a Ford V-8 engine and other Ford parts which was called the Gatso or Gatford. This had startling aerodynamics with a cluster of lights on the front and covered occupants with a perspex canopy. The Gatso did not prosper, as it was under-capitalised and Ford components were hard to get.

Gatsonides now had agencies for Studebaker and the British Hillman and Humber. He took a Studebaker on his first major post-war rally, the 1947 Alpine Trial, and when the Monte Carlo Rally was revived in 1949, he won an award with a Hillman. The following year he was second overall with a Humber Super Snipe, a most unlikely rally car.

While the Monte had the glamour and the publicity to the real rallyist success in the Alpine was the true criterion of a leading driver. The Alpine ran for a week in high summer over the toughest Alpine passes; the aim was to win an Alpine Cup for finishing without losing any marks. In 1951, Gatsonides was offered a works Jaguar XK 120 for the Alpine and Bill Mackenzie, the motoring correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph*, went with him as navigator and co-driver. The Jaguar broke down on the last day with a water leak when a cup was in sight; afterwards Mackenzie said he would

never go with Gatsonides again, it was too frightening.

In the 1952 Alpine he again used an XK 120 and this time secured a cup. His great win though, which secured him a permanent place in rallying history, was the 1953 Monte when he drove a Ford Zephyr; afterwards he admitted that he had taken the easier route over the Massif Central, but despite this had lost time and his winning margin was only three seconds.

The Monte always had a strong element of chance and in 1954 Gatsonides was paired with another former winner Marcel Becquart in a works DB 2/4 Aston Martin. They had a huge lead but lost it when Becquart missed a secret control and they fell to seventh place.

Gatsonides also tried his hand at motor racing, but he was a steady long-distance driver rather than a wheel-to-wheel racer, so in his four appearances in the Le Mans 24-hour race he treated it more as a fast rally than a race; he was placed 12th with an Austin-Healey in 1953 and 11th with a Frazer Nash in 1954. He also drove a Triumph TR3 in the 1954 Mille Miglia, the legendary Italian open road race. He was nominated as a co-driver of a Maserati in the 1952 Dutch Grand Prix but the car fell out so he never had the chance to match his abilities against the grand-prix drivers of the day.

In 1954 Gatsonides switched his rallying allegiance to Triumph and stayed with the British firm for the next four years, gaining Alpine Cups in 1954 and 1956 and many

minor places. During this time, he also had successful outings with Porsche and DKW.

By the end of the 1950s a new and younger generation of rally drivers had emerged, so he gracefully moved away from the front-line events but still kept active driving Citroën ID19s in the Mobil Economy Runs, rallies which required rapidity with a light throttle foot. He won the Mobil event in 1958, and scored a hat-trick between 1964 and 1966.

Gatsonides retired as an active competition driver in the mid-1960s but showed his talent in a new and very profitable field. He had considerable skill as an electrical and electronic engineer and developed two devices which have had a great impact on British motorists.

First he invented the familiar timing device for catching speeding drivers, using two parallel rubber tubes set a short distance apart which operate pressure switches as vehicles cross them. His second device was the Gatso flash camera which is now a familiar feature on road junctions throughout Britain, apprehending drivers who jump traffic lights.

Maurice Gatsonides was a man of great charm who had many friends in Britain; his son is now managing director of the Gatso electronic companies.

DAVID VENABLES

Maurice Gatsonides, rally driver; born Gombong, Java 14 February 1911; married 1941 (one son, and one daughter deceased); died 29 November 1998.



Orion's name came from the title of a 1979 book about Elvis

ELVIS PRESLEY was so innovative and so distinctive that there have been impersonators from the moment he started making hit records in 1956. Ray Donner scored hits in the early 1960s as a quasi-Elvis, and numerous singers, including Cliff Richard and Billy Fury, copied his stage actions.

However, it was Elvis's triumphant return to concert performances in the late Sixties wearing bejewelled jump suits, and his subsequent death in 1977, that caused promoters everywhere to send in the clones. The real thing was no more, and many Elvis impersonators made a good living, and still do, by acting out their fantasies on stage. Orion was the first to exploit Elvis's death and, notoriously, wanted to convince listeners that Elvis had faked his own death and was back performing. He wore a mask so the masquerade was not too transparent. His record releases were on Sun, the very label on which Elvis had started.

In reality, Orion was the club singer Jimmy Ellis, who was born in

Orrville, Alabama, in 1945. Ellis recorded an album under his own name, *Sometimes Words Just Get In The Way*, for a small label in 1964. His fans remarked how closely he spoke and sang like Elvis. He maintained that it was coincidence.

In 1968 the Nashville entrepreneur Shelby Singleton acquired the back catalogue of Sun Records, though Elvis's tracks belonged to RCA. At first, Singleton marketed well-packaged reissues, but in 1972 he had Ellis record the titles on Elvis's first Sun single, "That's All Right (Mama)" and "Blue Moon Of Kentucky". They were released with a "P" for the artist, and it was mooted that they were alternative takes from Elvis's first recording session in 1954. However, Singleton had used an electric bass which had not even been invented at the time.

Undeterred, Singleton revived his hopes with Ellis's early death in 1977. The mysterious "P" released a yuletide single, "Don't Cry For Christmas", and Ellis's voice was added to familiar Sun tracks by Jerry

Lee Lewis, Carl Perkins and Charlie Rich. "Save The Last Dance For Me" by Jerry Lee Lewis and "Friend" by Jerry Lee Lewis and Friend" was issued as a single in 1978.

The sleeve carried an endorsement from the song's composer, Doc Pomus, stating that he was sure it was Elvis. A voice test on the television programme *Good Morning America* confirmed that the mystery voice was indeed Elvis. Even the hard-hitting *New Musical Express* was fooled: Roy Carr wrote, "I reckon on this track is genuine and as such it's quite magnificent - a timely reminder of when recording sessions used to be fun." By today's standards, Ellis was not even a particularly good Elvis soundalike. Whilst this was going on, Ellis released a tribute single under his own name, "I'm Not Trying To Be Like Elvis", and an album, *By Request - Ellis Sings Elvis*.

Also in 1978, the author Gail Brewer-Gioia published a novel, *Orion*, which told of an Elvis-style rock star who faked his own death. (The name was derived from Elvis's

middle name, Aaron.) This struck a chord with Shelby Singleton and so Jimmy Ellis became Orion, whose debut album, *Reborn*, was released by Sun on gold vinyl in 1979. The cover showed the masked singer emerging from a coffin.

Just as children believe in Santa Claus, some fans wanted to believe that Orion was Elvis. Orion took his persona so seriously that he even wore his mask for rehearsals. Quite often he appeared on shows with Elvis Presley's former vocal backing group, the Jordanaires.

The ersatz Elvis had several singles in the US country charts, including "Am I That Easy To Forget" (1980) and US versions of the British hits "Rockabilly Rebel" (originally by Matchbox) and "Crazy Little Thing Called Love" (Queen), both 1981. With commendable productivity, he recorded several albums for Sun, *Sunrise* (1979), *Rockabilly* (1980), *Country* (1980), *Fresh* (1981), *Glory* (1981) and *Feelings* (1981). He built up a considerable live following, then in 1983 he ripped off his mask

before a capacity audience and vowed never to wear it again.

The full-faced Jimmy Ellis was nowhere near as popular and so in 1987 Ellis returned to the mask and his Orion persona. He released an album, *New Beginnings*, in 1987 and said at the time, "I don't mind being compared to Elvis, but I always wanted my own identity as an artist."

Orion found his comeback hard because, by then, Elvis impersonators had become commonplace: nowadays, there are Asian, Chinese and even female Elvises. Ellis and his girlfriend, Elaine Thompson, also ran a general store in Selma, Alabama. They were there when an armed robbery took place and both lost their lives. Ellis's last performance as the pseudo-Elvis had been in Nashville a week earlier.

SPENCER LEIGH

Jimmy Hodges Ellis (Orion), singer; born Orrville, Alabama 26 February 1945; one son; died Selma, Alabama 12 December 1998.

William Denson

NUREMBERG is the universal shorthand for the trials of Nazi criminals held after the Second World War. In fact, however, it was the trials in which William Denson served which dealt with the truly horrendous cases. They involved the lesser-ranking officials, bureaucrats and military officers who actually carried out the bestial policies mapped out by Hitler and his closest henchmen. Indeed, in terms of death sentences sought and carried out, Denson was the most successful of all US war crimes prosecutors. Of the 177 Nazis who appeared before him, 132 were sentenced to death and 97 went to the gallows.

Denson was a 32-year old graduate of the West Point army academy and Harvard Law School when he was sent to the Judge Advocate's Office in Europe in 1945, and assigned as chief prosecutor for the trials which were soon to start at Dachau covering crimes committed at Buchenwald, Matthausen, Flossen-berg and Dachau itself. Technically the four were "mere" concentration camps, rather than Vernichtungslager, or extermination camps, such as Auschwitz or Treblinka. But the wickednesses committed there were scarcely less egregious.

Among those prosecuted by Denson was August Eigruber, a Nazi

Gauleiter in upper Austria whom he later described as "one of the most arrogant defendants I have ever encountered". Even from the scaffold, as the noose went around his neck, Eigruber shouted "Heil Hitler". The most famous defendant with whom he dealt however was Ilse Koch, dubbed the "Beast of Buchenwald" for her habit of personally selecting prisoners for sadistic beatings and torture which often killed them, and accused of having lampshades and photograph albums made of tattooed human skin.

Because she was pregnant when she went for trial, the 40-year-old Koch was sentenced to life impris-

onment rather than death for her crimes against non-Germans. To Denson's declared disgust, her term was reduced in 1947 to only four years by General Lucius Clay, then the senior US official in occupied Germany. However she was resentenced to life by a German court for crimes against German citizens, and eventually committed suicide in 1967.

In a 1990 interview, Denson recalled how at first, although hardened to the horrors of war, he could not believe what he was hearing from camp survivors:

I thought here were some people who had been mistreated in the camps and were seeking revenge, and that they were real-

ly doing a job drawing on fantasy rather than reality. But when I questioned witnesses, and they recounted substantially the same things, then I knew the events had occurred, because these people did not have a chance to get together and fabricate their stories.

Those who were in the dock struck him as having come from fairly normal backgrounds: but, Denson said, exposure to violence merely generated more violence; experience of atrocity merely raised the threshold of future atrocity. Of the 177 people he prosecuted, only four were acquitted, and 132 were sentenced to death. It was the high-water mark for war crimes trials in Europe. A dozen more tribunals

would sit in Nuremberg, but of the 185 who appeared before them, just 25 were sentenced to death.

In 1948 Denson returned home from Europe to become chief litigator for the Atomic Energy Commission in Washington - only to find himself representing the AEC in the trial of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, who were convicted and executed in 1953 for passing atomic secrets to the Soviet Union. He then became a partner in a New York law firm, specialising in patents and copyright, before ending his career with Melzer, Lippe, Goldstein, Wolf and Schlissel of Mineola, Long Island.

RUPERT CORNWELL



War crimes prosecutor

William Denson, lawyer; born Birmingham, Alabama 1913; married 1950 Constance von Francken-Sierstorff (one son, two daughters); died Lawrence, New York 13 December 1998.

Alfred Roth



Roth's buildings epitomised the Functionalism style. René Burri/Book Art Architecture Picture Library

THE SWISS architect, artist and writer Alfred Roth was one of the last of the original generation of international modern architects closely associated with the Functionalism cause.

In 1927, he spent some time in Le Corbusier's atelier in Paris. There he worked on and wrote about the Le Corbusier villa and apartment blocks built that year for the Weissenhof Exhibition on the Weissenhof, Stuttgart. The following year he went to Gothenburg in Sweden, where he designed a series of low-cost apartments in the modern style.

He commenced his own architectural practice in 1931 in Zurich where four years later he collaborated with Marcel Breuer, the former Bauhaus master, and his cousin Emil Roth (they practised as Alfred and Emil Roth) on the renowned Dolderer apartment blocks in Zurich, which were the epitome of the cubic Functionalism style: plain, flat-roofed, white buildings. He built his own house there in 1960, continuing the same tradition.

In the post-war period Roth worked closely with the Finnish architect Alvar Aalto whose work he had introduced to the Swiss public in an exhibition in Zurich in 1941. They collaborated on many projects, a fact acknowledged in the exhibition - commemorating the centenary of Aalto's birth - now showing at the Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule, where Roth's archives are held.

His personal archive is extensive, containing material of a lifetime's practice as an architect as well as the records of the years he served as editor of the Swiss-based architectural magazine *Werk* (1943-56). The polemic he waged in *Werk* underlined his own interest in regional architecture and the work of Frank Lloyd Wright, someone else he met, promoted and exhibited in Zurich.

Roth was concerned with the integration of the arts. He saw them best united under the banner of a "Modern" architecture: "All my architectural endeavours and all my thinking are firmly based on the principles of... functional architecture," he wrote in 1980, although he warned that the most important aspect of Functionalism was its demand for "beauty, harmony, nobility, and inventiveness".

He was also a minor painter in his own right, following closely the De Stijl work of Max Bill and the Swiss/German Konkret artists from the mid-twenties whose Constructivist paintings and three-dimensional artefacts introduced formal, grids, patterns, primary colours and geometrical shapes. In this

kind of art - as in the rationalist architecture it paralleled - the artist determines everything mathematically.

Roth is probably best remembered in Britain for the excellent exhibition he curated at the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) in 1946 on Swiss architecture and planning and for his much admired books. He published *The New Architecture*, in 1939. In it, he

issued in 1950 and his autobiography, *Alfred Roth: Architektur der Kontinuität* in 1985. He was made an honorary member of the RIBA in 1948.

Alfred Roth was a generous man and widely admired locally as a *Vermittler* (or facilitator), bringing together people from many disciplines, encouraging writers and students to clarify their thoughts on art and architecture. He

the estate with a Swiss friend a few years ago, I rang his doorbell. He welcomed us and once inside I discovered one of my own books opened on his drawing board at the pages that featured his work.

Soon he was talking us through his work. He was still active as architect in his late eighties. We looked briefly at the drawings of his work on the Middle East, particularly his accomplished Sabag Centre in Beirut (with Aalto). But it was his own house he was most proud of and he took us on a tour. He pointed out the many small Mondrian-like coloured drawings he had propped up all over the house - except in the rooms hired out to students.

Significantly, he had reduced his own living requirements to a camp bed in the living room and the use of the shared facilities. He lived out his Functionalism role to the end.

DENNIS SHARP

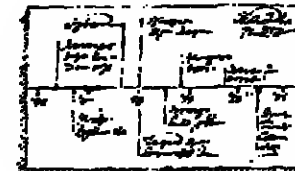
Alfred Roth, architect, born Wangen, Switzerland 21 May 1903; died Zurich 20 October 1998.

He warned that the most important aspect of Functionalism was its demand for 'beauty, harmony, nobility and inventiveness'

featured the Boots Factory at Beeston in Nottinghamshire by Sir Owen Williams side by side with work by the second generation of Modern Movement masters, thus acknowledging the successful diaspora of the Functionalism idea. His book on the New School was

served as a professor of architecture at the Swiss Federal Institute from 1957 to 1971 and taught briefly at Harvard.

His own house and studio on the Dolderer estate have more recently become a place of pilgrimage for a whole new generation of architects. Touring



HISTORICAL NOTES

RALPH HARRINGTON

People on the move in the ancient world

TRANSPORT IS as old as human society; as long as people have been around, they have moved themselves and the things they need from place to place.

The oldest recorded story in the world, the Mesopotamian *Epic of Gilgamesh* from the third millennium BC, contains an important and enigmatic passage about Urshanabi, the ferryman of Utnapishtim, who carries King Gilgamesh of Uruk across the ocean that is the boundary of the known world: this is possibly the earliest reference we have to a transport professional. Fifteen hundred years later we have the account of the difficulties Odysseus encountered in voyaging from Troy to Ithaca. The 500-mile journey ended up taking him 10 years; not for nothing in the ancient world was the sea regarded as alarming and untrustworthy.

Land travel, too, had its perils. In the Old Testament we have, in the Book of Numbers, the story of Balaam and the angel; the seer Balaam, travelling in the course of his duties (but contrary to God's will) to the land of Moab, was halted, then infuriated, then violent and abusive, when the ass he was riding came to a sudden halt, having seen, as her rider could not, the angel of the Lord blocking the path. Balaam's anger, we are told, "was kindled, and he smote the ass with his staff"; an early example of road rage.

Rome, of course, had its roads. The heart of Rome was the ancient equivalent of a road sign: the *miliarium aureum*, the golden milestone, from which the great roads - the Via Flaminia, the Via Aurelia, the Via Appia - radiated the length and breadth of Europe, and beyond, into Africa and Asia. And along those roads moved merchants, artisans, farmers, doctors, civil servants, and of course generals and soldiers; and along them, too, travelled the language and customs of Rome, literature and philosophy, religions old and new. The Roman road was simultaneously military hardware, political symbol, cultural conduit and economic infrastructure, and this is why no means the last time transport systems have embodied this conjunction of the political, the cultural and the economic.

The stupendously engineered road network of the Incas had a similar significance in their society; and in more modern times the Grand Trunk Road of Mughal, and then British, India, memorably described in Rudyard Kipling's *Kim*, provides another example.

The Roman Empire came to an end in the fifth century AD, but the roads remained to form the basic element of land transport in Europe for another thousand and more years. The people of this post-Roman world travelled a lot more than we tend to think.

The old image of medieval and early modern people living their whole lives in their own village, generally travelling no more than two or three miles, with a trip to the local market town amounting to a major adventure, while not without elements of truth, is a simplistic generalisation. Medieval society was full of people on the move: officers of state, nobles, armies, clergy, scholars, pilgrims, drovers. Roads were, by modern standards, poor, and travel was highly seasonally dependent, but travel people did do.

Travel is more than just the utilitarian expression of the human requirement: it is also an expression of freedom. Societies which have sought to limit freedom have always controlled travel and transport, the movement of people, goods and ideas.

Today the networks of transport we have around us and upon which we depend are expressions of a greater modern freedom. The freedom of movement, a freedom which is spread more widely and has a greater influence than has ever been the case before. The consequence of this freedom is prosperity, opportunity and a richness of life inconceivable to most of our ancestors.

Ralph Harrington is writing *Metropolis in Motion: transport, communication and the modern city, 1880-1940*

GAZETTE

BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS

DEATHS

LARK, Mary, aged 90, peacefully in Greenwich. Funeral at Mordean Chapel, Blackheath, 31 December at 3pm.

LEPPER, nee Barton, on 18 December, in Creighton Hospital, Patricia, aged 88 years, beloved mother of Vernon, Victor and Gerald Hill, and stepmother of Edward and Richard Hepper. Funeral service at St Mary's Church, Mordean, on Thursday 24 December at 11am, followed by interment at St Mary's. Inquiries to A. White & Sons 01363 772043.

MULGAM, Diana, died peacefully at home on Friday 18 December, aged 50 years. Wife of Tom. Graham. Funeral to take place on Wednesday 23 December at 3.30pm at Mordean Crematorium. Flowers or donations for "The Hale Clinic" or "Musicians Benevolent Fund" to be sent to: T.H. Sanders & Sons, 35 High Street, Barnes, SW13. The Rev Barry Smith will officiate.

Announcements for Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS (Births, Adoptions, Marriages, Deaths, Memorial Services, Wedding anniversaries, In memoriam) are charged at £6.50 a line (VAT extra). OTHER Gazette announcements (notices, obituaries, forthcoming marriages, Marriages), which must be submitted in writing, are charged at £10 a line, VAT extra. Always include a daytime telephone number.

CHANGING OF THE GUARD

The Household Cavalry founded Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am; 1st Battalion The Duke of Wellington's Regiment mounts the Queen's Guard, Buckingham Palace, 3.30am, band provided by the Scots Guards.

BIRTHDAYS

Air Chief Marshal Sir John Aiken, 77; Lady Archer of Weston-super-Mare, scientist, 54; Sir Douglas Brown, High Court judge, 67; Mr Robin Corbett MP, 65; Mr James Cropper, Lord-Lieutenant of Cumbria, 60; Viscount Davidson, former government whip, 70; Mr Noel Edmonds, television presenter, 50; Mr Maurice Gibb, of the Bee Gees, 49; Mr Robin Gibb, of the Bee Gees, 49; Dr Judith McClure, Headmistress, St George's School, Edinburgh, 53; Sir Trevor Morris, chairman, Police Information Technology Organisation, 64; Mr Chris Old, former England cricketer, 50; The Rev Lord Sandford, former government minister, 78; Lord Stott, former Senator of the College of Justice in Scotland, 89; The Duke of Westminster, Chancellor, Manchester Metropolitan University, 47; Mr Ken Whitmore, playwright, 59; Sir Peregrine Worsthorne, writer and editor, 75.

ANNIVERSARIES

Births: Roger II, King of Sicily, 1095; Hermann Samuel Reimarus, theologian and philosopher, 1694; James Edward Oglethorpe, colonist and founder of Georgia, 1696; Jean-Etienne Liotard, painter, 1702; Carl Friedrich Abel, composer, 1733; John Crome ("Old Crome"), landscape painter, 1768; Franz Abt, composer and conductor, 1819; Jean-Henri Fabre, naturalist, 1823; Charles Stuart Calverley, poet and parodist, 1831; William Hale White ("Mark Rutherford"), novelist, 1831; John Nevill Maskelyne, stage magician, 1839; Teresa Carreno, pianist, 1853; Giacomo Antonio Domenico Michele Secondo Maria Puccini, operatic composer, 1858; Edwin Arlington Robinson, poet, 1869; Franz Schmidt, com-

poser, 1874; Edgard (Edgar) Victor Achille-Charles Varèse, composer, 1883; Deems Taylor, composer, 1895; Alan Dudley Bush, composer, conductor and pianist, 1900; Pierre Brasseur (Pierre-Albert Espinasse), actor, 1905.

Deaths: Aulus Vitellius, Roman emperor, beheaded AD 69; Francois Clouet (Janet), miniature painter, 1572; Maximilien de Béthune, Duc de Sully, soldier and statesman, 1641; Giovanni Francesco Barbieri (Guerchino), painter, 1666; Richard Alleine, religious writer, 1681; Michel Baron (Michel Boyron), actor and playwright, 1729; Jan Dismas Zelenka, composer, 1745; Simon Mathurin Lantara, landscape painter, 1778; James Harris, grammarian, 1780; Sir Philip Francis, civil servant and writer, 1818; The Rev Martin Joseph Roth, scholar, 1854; George Eliot (Mary Ann Evans), novelist, 1880; Henry Watterson, journalist and politician, 1921; Dwight Lyman Moody, evangelist, 1899; Baron Richard von Krafft-Ebing, psychiatrist, 1902; Nathaniel West (Nathan Walenstein Weinstein), novelist, 1940; Franz Boas, anthropologist, 1942; Helen Beatrice Potter, writer and artist, 1943; Harry Langdon, silent film comedian, 1944; Richard Frederick Dimbleby, television commentator, 1965; Josef von Sternberg, film director, 1969; Darryl Francis Zanuck, film producer, 1978; William Henry Pilkington, Baron Pilkington, 1983; David Penhaligon MP killed in a car accident 1988; Lord (Ted) Willis, playwright, politician and writer, 1992.

On this day: the Gregorian calendar was introduced into Germany and Switzerland, 1583; James Stuart, the Old Pretender, landed at Peterhead, 1715; the first pantomime in England was staged at the Lincoln's Inn

Theatre, 1716; Beethoven's 5th and 6th (Pastoral) symphonies were first played in Vienna, 1808; Alfred Dreyfus was convicted and sentenced to imprisonment on Devil's Island, 1895; the Ministry of Pensions was first set up, 1916; the musical show *Lilac Time* was first produced in London, 1922; in Java, the Merapi volcano erupted, causing over 700 deaths, 1930; the musical show *High Button Shoes* was first produced in London, 1948; the withdrawal of British and French forces from Port Said was completed, 1956; Southern Rhodesia left the Commonwealth, 1966; Kurt Waldheim was elected Secretary-General of the United Nations, 1971; a violent earthquake in Guinea resulted in over 400 deaths, 1983; a Pan American jumbo jet crashed on to the town of Lockerbie in Scotland, killing all 258 passengers and crew, and 11 people on the ground, 1988.

Today is the Feast Day of St Chaeremon and Others, St Flavian of Tuscany, St Ischyron and St Zeno.

LECTURES

Victoria and Albert Museum: Clare Ford Wille, "Neo-Classical Portraiture", 2pm.

EPIME ESHAG

A memorial occasion to commemorate the life and work of Epime Eshag will be held in Wadham College, Oxford, on Saturday 23 January 1999, starting in the Holywell Music Room at 2.30pm.

DINNERS

Royal Society of Saint George: Lord Levene of Portsoken, Lord Mayor of London, and Lady Levene, Lady Mayoress,

accompanied by the Sheriffs and their ladies, attended the Christmas Banquet of the City of London Branch of the Royal Society of Saint George at Mansion House, London EC4. Mr Michael Chism, Chairman, accompanied by Mrs Chism, presided. Sir Michael Knight also spoke. The Rev Basil Walter gave the Christmas Blessing.

CHURCH APPOINTMENTS

The following appointments have been announced by the Church of England:

The Rev Martin Cleve, Head of RE, Bromford School, Welford (Cheshire): has been appointed Priest-in-Charge, Great Morningside and Ripple with Sutton-by-Dover; Northbourne and Beetham with Ham (Cambridgeshire); to be Priest-in-Charge, Men-benot (Trent). The Rev Philip Harrison, Rector, Drayton with Felpham (Northamptonshire): to be also Honorary Canon of Norwich Cathedral (same diocese). The Rev Alan Marshall, Curate, Whiteley, Hants (Hampshire): to be also Honorary Canon of Norwich Cathedral (same diocese). The Rev John Poul, Warden and Sacrist, St Paul's Cathedral, London: to be Vicar, Winchester Hill St Paul (same diocese). The Rev Lawrence Price, Priest-in-Charge, Kingsley (Lichfield): to be also Rural Dean of Cheside (same diocese). The Rev David Purdy, Vicar, Kirby Moxley with Gillingham, Farnside and Smeadale (York): to be also Honorary Canon, York Minster (same diocese). The Rev Barry Rache, Team Rector, Gloucester and Stroud, and Rural Dean of Tarnworth (Leeds): to be Vicar, Dutton Broad St Mark and St Luke the Evangelist (Northamptonshire). The Rev Barbara Steadman-Alen, Curate, Chertsey St Peter with All Saints (Guildford): to be Priest-in-Charge, Michelton, and Chaplain, Box Hill School (same diocese). The Rev Peter Stephens, Team Rector, High Oak, Hingham and Southwold with Wood Blasing (Norfolk): to be also Honorary Canon of Norwich Cathedral (same diocese). The Rev Geoff Ticker, Vicar, New Haw (Guildford): has been appointed also Rural Dean of Runnymede (same diocese). The Rev Andrew West, Team Vicar, Bedworth (Coventry): to be Chaplain, Cheltenham and Gloucester College of Higher Education (Gloucestershire). The Rev Quentin Wilson, Priest-in-Charge, Burnley St Peter (Blackburn): to be Rector, same benefice.

Mistletoe: a plant for all seasons

THE INDEPENDENT ARCHIVE
22 DECEMBER 1987

Before ever a couple kissed under the Christmas mistletoe, it was a plant of ancient religious significance. Now it is emerging as a treatment for cancers.
Oliver Gillie reports

of the forest can seek shelter from bleak winter weather. Druidic power is still tacitly recognised today, in so far as the plant is forbidden in churches.

Belief that mistletoe imparts fecundity may be the original reason why we kiss beneath it. A couple who come together beneath the sacred plant may receive power from it and conceive.

Apart from its sacred qualities, Pliny recognised 11 conditions which mistletoe could treat. He recommends the glutinous material from the berries to treat inflamed swellings of every description, to heal wounds, for rectifying malformed nails and to desiccate scrofulous sores. Most interesting of all, he suggested that mistletoe could be used to "disperse tumours". It is possible that Lindow man was treating himself for cancer. None was found in the upper part of his body but it is possible that there was a tumour in the lower part of the body which was not preserved.

Almost 2,000 years after

Pliny suggested mistletoe for tumours doctors in Germany and Switzerland are beginning to get results which suggest that the plant could be useful in cancer treatment.

Dr Georg Salzer, a doctor in the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute in Vienna, has been using mistletoe with cancer patients for 30 years. He says: "Mistletoe is not a miracle cure or a wonder drug. I don't want to overstate its importance but it can achieve results." He has treated 4,000 people with injections of mistletoe extract in combination with drugs or radiation. His work suggests that mistletoe extracts not only attack cancer cells but also stimulate the immune system. The extracts appear to stimulate lymphocytes (white blood cells) to attack the tumour.

There may be a special reason why mistletoe is a good source of products effective against cancer. Being a parasite, mistletoe contains a number of substances which appear to protect it against poisons produced by the host tree in an attempt to get rid of it. Last year a whole volume of *Oncology*, a respectable international journal on cancer, was devoted to mistletoe. In a foreword, Dr Hartmut Franz, a Berlin cancer specialist, points out that many drugs used in orthodox medicine were first discovered as herbs or by chance, then finally developed in an optimal form. This has yet to be done for mistletoe.

From the Health page of *The Independent*, Tuesday 22 December 1987. The Law Report resumes with the Law Term, on 11 January 1999

THE JOHN Lennon box, handily titled *Anthology*, merited a pun upon *chrestomathy*, Greek for useful learning, it is less random. The last OED instance is 1883, but new, wide currency came in 1949 with *The Menckens Chrestomathy*. Mencken, Alistair Cooke's hero, ignored the word's recent

WORDS
CHRISTOPHER HAWTREE
chrestomathy, n.

nuance, an aid to the acquiring of a language; nor was he deterred by a few newspaper smarties [who] protested that the word

would be unfamiliar to many readers, as it was to them. Thousands of excellent nouns, verbs and adjectives that have stood in every decent dictionary for years are still unfamiliar to such ignoramuses, and I do not solicit their patronage.

Let them continue to recreate themselves with whodunnits, and leave my vocabulary and me to my own customers, who have all been to school.

Forget Santa: Christmas is a girl thing

At the Nativity Mary took centre stage and Joseph had a walk-on part. Today it's even worse – men are almost redundant at Christmas. By Andrew Martin

In *Jesus, My Boy*, currently playing at the Apollo Theatre in London, the writer, John Dowle, sets out to promote the forgotten man of Christmas. That man was Joseph, whose role in the Nativity was to be grateful and humbly accepting of his fate while generally letting his wife and child take the limelight – a very similar reaction, in fact, to the one required of a latter-day male receiving a humorous huddle bath on Christmas morning.

For the fact is that men are the forgotten men of Christmas. There's just nothing in it for them. They must sit by ever-growing piles of socks, muttering: "Just what I've always wanted", or trying to make their faces do that thing that women's automatically do at this time of year when long-forgotten relatives appear: "light up". In the end they usually have to settle for lighting up a cigarette.

I personally am marginalised in my household from about the start of Advent. That's when my wife begins buying presents, writing cards, making lists, often while listening to loud tapes of Christmas carols to get her in the mood, which is very disturbing when you consider that she's not only Jewish but an atheist.

But Christmas isn't a religious thing any more. It's a woman's thing, and as the festival has grown, so it's become even more of a woman's thing: one big, stressful, inter-household domestic arts con-

petition. In America, women are literally going mad while "doing" Christmas, according to the blueprint of the lifestyle guru, Martha Stewart. The centrepiece of the Martha Stewart Christmas spread is her famously challenging gingerbread house, which one of her disciples once wrote in to say – with pride and without bitterness – that she had completed after an entire year of more or less continuous work (longer, in all probability, than it would have taken her to build a real house).

In Britain, the obstacle course is laid out by Della Smith. Consider the subtitle of her book, *Della Smith's Christmas*: "One hundred and thirty recipes... for Christmas." The tension mounts steadily throughout the book, which culminates in a terrifying chapter entitled "The last thirty-six hours".

And what's happening to the men as the clock ticks towards the glorious apotheosis/tear-stained nadir that is Christmas lunch? Well, they're sharing the highs, of course, as when the salt-crusted mini baked potatoes with cold chive hollandaise approximate to the photograph on page 146... but then again, who really cares about that?

They're also sharing the lows, which tend to be more memorable, and louder. These usually occur in our house as my wife is baking her Traditional Christmas Biscuits for serving at a soiree on Christmas Eve. Now, she's superb at most of the

Christmas arts, but not great at baking, and the making of the Traditional Christmas Biscuits is traditionally preceded by the throwing out of the lot from last year.

Generally the Biscuits burn while I'm supposed to be watching them (except that I didn't hear her say that I should be watching them, or I accidentally throw out the mixture. Or whatever. The upshot is that I end up feeling like Johnny to her Fanny Craddock, George to her Mildred: a wretched lump, called on to help, yet unable to; and deep down I know that my help is in fact not wanted because my wife likes doing Christmassy things and wants to do them unaided.

That's my rationale, anyway, and I'm sticking to it. I've got enough on my hands doing the alien Christmas tasks which are entrusted to me, such as the sending of Christmas cards to those of our friends who are more mine than hers.

This year, after the usual agonising, I have selected an image of a graveyard – a little downbeat maybe, but sobered-sad and dignified: a good, many image. All the profits from these cards go to charity (I think they're in aid of the dead or something) so that's good too. But I'm worried about the inscription: "May the peace and joy of Christmas be with you through the year." That word "joy"... it's not really me.

A proper man's Christmas card would say something cautious like: "Wishing you a trouble-free festive



season", or "Here's Hoping You Can Get Away to the Football on Boxing Day". Then you might not feel that every card you sent was a betrayal of your masculinity.

Another problem area for men is the wrapping and giving of presents. There should be degree courses in this, the syllabus to include subjects such as "How to control Sellotape" and "What constitutes a nice pair of earrings?" At best, the presents I give my wife can be exchanged for something she really wants, whereas hers to me might have been the product of mind-reading. In this context it's absurd that Father Christmas – that paragon of wrapping and giving – is a man. What Father Christmas should be is a woman, which he's no

doubt already become in the more PC areas of London.

That said, though, I have been on an upward curve in gift-giving ever since I was 10. In that year I gave my father a stone for Christmas. Not just an ordinary stone, of course. No, I'd taken some trouble to write his name, "Dad", in green felt-tip across the top of it. He approved of this gift because he didn't have to pretend to be very grateful (it was only a stone, after all) and at least it wasn't after-shave. (Note to gift-giving aunts: men do not use after-shave.)

My father is a kind person but like a lot of men left to their own devices, a Christmas sceptic. And he was left to his own devices, my mother having died when I was young. So

when, as a small boy, I'd ask him how Santa Claus could come down our chimney when we had a gas fire pretty firmly cemented in there, he would just shrug and say: "Magic", in a take-it-or-leave-it tone. No elaborately constructed whimsical explanations; no bullshit. Of course, shopping was torture to him, which is why his Christmas presents to me were usually a tinner whipped out of his wallet as he grudgingly stuffed the turkey.

"Don't spend it all at once," he'd say, as he handed it over. No "merry Christmas" or "compliments of the season", because those words are not designed to be uttered between two males.

At my wife's prompting, we strive to give our own children a cosy, mag-

ical Della Smith-type Christmas. And one of the 50 or so tasks on her Christmas list is the leaving out of a glass of port for Santa, which I am required to do down before going to bed (no great hardship, admittedly) just in case our forensically astute boys smell a rat come the morning. But still they're in tears by 8am as children always will be as long as the words "batteries not included" are part of the English language.

On reflection, I am aware that a slight note of curmudgeonliness may be detectable in this article. But I'm not entirely pessimistic. The miserableness of men at Christmas could be reduced by the simple expedient of reducing Christmas. And who knows? A lot of women might find they like it that way too.

It's the time of year to catch up with family, meet old friends, eat decent food and... get the laundry done. By Cayte Williams

Home is... where the washing machine is

THE STUDENTS have finally come to the end of their first term in the second year. After three months of juggling essays, parties and work they are going home for a bit of TLC – time out, laundry and cooking.

Parents all over the country are looking forward to seeing their offspring return home, only to find themselves knee-deep in dirty washing and washing-up. How many Quality Street can one person eat? They will ask themselves. And how much telly can a 19-year-old watch without turning catatonic?

"I've just packed," says Rosie, "and I'm taking all my clothes that aren't clean. I'm going home for six weeks and I can't pick my bag up. And I'm going to have lots of cooked meals. My mum always says I treat the house like a hotel because I'm always popping in and out. I only really stay at home to eat and sleep."

Despite the burden on their washing machine, does Rosie's family miss her? "My mum will miss me now because she hasn't seen me for a month and a half, but at the same time they like the peace without me. My brother is 16 and we always fight when I go

THIS STUDENT LIFE



END OF TERM AT THE MANCHESTER STUDENT HOUSE

home. We're always winding each other up. When I go home, I deliberately sit in his seat in the living-room just to annoy him."

Although Rosie loves going home, she feels she's outgrown her old role in the family.

"I feel a bit odd now," she explains, "like I'm a guest."

Leona's mum thinks she treats the place like a hotel, too. But then she might have a point, since she usually gets her mum to drive up from Coventry so she can fit all her washing in the car. This year, however, Leona is getting the train.

"I'm still taking loads of laundry though," she says. "I'm only going back for a month, because I want to come back to Manchester and look for a job. I'm looking forward to seeing my mum and having clean clothes, a clean house and proper dinners."

Both girls are not as bone idle as they sound. They're going to work while they're away, Leona for a local firm and Rosie in the china and glass department of Harrods: "I work over Christmas and through the sale," she explains. "It's hell for a few weeks but then I'll get all this money to pay off my debts."

Although Rosie works hard, she enjoys it. "They pile all the china really high during the sale and it's so funny when someone knocks it over, because when one plate goes they all go." She's also served

some famous faces: "Ringo Starr came in with his wife Barbara," she recalls. "He was really charming. He asked me what my favourite thing in the department was, and said that he'd probably get that I just missed Jack Nicholson once and I was gutted."

Tash is looking forward to going home to London for the holidays, and probably gets the most homesick of everyone. "I'm not a big fan of Christmas," she explains, "but it will be nice to see my daddy and my brother." Tash is particularly close to her father, as he brought up both her and her older brother single-handedly after their mother died when Tash was only nine. "We're very close. I speak to him on the telephone every day. It's a silly thing, really. I don't have to. My daddy's really great." She's not so enthusiastic about this time of year: "I don't get excited about Christmas. I suppose I'm looking forward to eating, drinking and getting merry," she says, "and I'll do some good home cooking."

Ian, meanwhile, isn't going home over Christmas. He'll be working at Revolution, the pub where he has a

bar job, but he doesn't really mind. "I'll make some decent money and have a good laugh," he explains, "and then I'm going to the Edinburgh street party for New Year."

So will he miss any of his friends while they're away? "There's this girl called Heidi," he says, rather coyly, "and I would like to wish her a merry Christmas." So is romance in the air? Ian plays it cautiously: "We're just friends," he says.

Meanwhile, Alistair and David are going to warmer climes. Alistair is off to visit his dad, who works for the North Carolina State University in America.

"Last time I saw my dad it was Easter," he explains. "I'm looking forward to seeing him and meeting up with my friend Tory. And I can't wait to get in a car and drive on the open road." Talk about culture shock. Will he ever be able to adjust back to Manchester buses?

David's also looking forward to some peace and quiet, although he's going to Hong Kong, a place not renowned for tranquillity. "I have my own spot in the park overlooking the harbour," he says. "I've never seen anybody else there. It's ironic that I'm in this big, bustling city and I've found this

place where I can just sit and chill," he explains. "I'm looking forward to seeing him and meeting up with my friend Tory. And I can't wait to get in a car and drive on the open road." Talk about culture shock. Will he ever be able to adjust back to Manchester buses?

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THE JOYS OF MODERN LIFE

25. HARRY HILL BY STUART HUSBAND



WITH HARRY Hill, you're either on the bus or off the bus. Those who don't find him the world's foremost comic genius tend to dismiss him. Fence-straddling is not an option. If the sight of him coming on stage with two plastic dogs clamped to his legs, singing "The only thing that looks good on me is you" throws the switch in your brain that leaves you helpless with mirth, you're on. If, on the other hand, you're left asking plaintively: "Why is this funny?" à la Margot in *The Good Life*, you're probably not destined to be a disciple. I was a comparatively late convert: I'd missed his early radio shows and tours, but friends who'd seen him live described the spectacle in awe-struck tones. Then, when I caught his first series on Channel 4, I saw instantly what they'd been

gibbering about. Here was someone who could effortlessly create a parallel world to the one we ordinarily inhabit. In the same way that *The Fast Show's* catch phrases accrue, over the weeks, into a kind of seamless whole, so Hill's cut-up routines and oblique non-sequiturs – "What are the chances of that happening, eh?" or "Oh Mr Lemon, why are your juices so sharp?" – acquire their own logic.

But the main thing that makes Harry Hill so appealing is the fact that his comedy springs from a kind of benevolence. While sarcasm, rage and humiliation have been the sources of comic inspiration for everyone from Basil Fawlty to Blackadder, Hill proves that you can get through half an hour without trashing or lashing out at anyone or anything. Even when his comedy flirts with racial stereotyping – he's recently acquired a mail-order Filipino wife, May Sung, whose mission in life is to get her hands on his Abbey National book – his genial, quizzical presence at the centre of things maintains the material's air of harmless innocence. Any intensity in Hill's persona is turned back on himself, with his neck swallowing collars, elaborate squint, shiny pate, and obsessive humming and hawing, he resembles a kind of wired big-baby savant (having trained and practised as a doctor at St George's Hospital in Tooting, he's presumably acquired a certain empathy with the wilder extremes of the human condition). It's no wonder that kids, who can spot a phoney a mile off, accept him as one of their own. In short, he's conquered the world – or at least, that portion of the world, myself among them, which has been cancelling engagements to get home for 11pm on Fridays – by being delightful. What are the chances of that happening, eh?

'Harry Hill's Christmas Sleigh Ride' will be broadcast tomorrow at 10.30pm on Channel 4

Doesn't do much, does he?

He's been compared to a bag of spanners. Yet he's done everything, from *Titus Andronicus* to *The Lost World: Jurassic Park*. And still we keep looking. And looking. The fact is, Pete Postlethwaite is a terrific actor who gives great face. By James Rampton

Pete Postlethwaite is candid about the way he looks. "It's all in the cheekbones, this career of mine," he says. "They are quite whopping, aren't they? Who was it that said: 'He looks like he's got a clavicle stuck in his mouth.'?" Other critics have scarcely been more flattering. One wrote of "those cheekbones bursting out of his head like swollen knuckles". Another commented that he had "a face like a bag of spanners".

Certainly his face has been his fortune. In a film world awash with actors apparently cloned from Ken and Barbie, Postlethwaite's lived-in looks stand out. "Hollywood is looking for different types," says Sita Williams, the producer of *Lost for Words*, his latest vehicle, a moving portrayal of a son caring for his mother (Thora Hird) after she has a stroke. "Pete is no different from Jack Nicholson. He's no great beauty, but he has great charisma. It's not about classic good looks, but presence."

Joy Spink is line producer on *Among Giants*, the new film scripted by the writer of *The Full Monty*, Simon Beaufoy. She sums up the film, touted as "a *Boys from the Blackstuff* for the Nineties," with a tongue-twister: "Pete Postlethwaite paints pylons." Spink adds: "He's not the sort of person I'd normally find attractive, but on screen it doesn't matter who he's with, you just can't stop looking at him."

But is all this swooning really called for? Aren't we Brits, riddled with inferiority complexes, always in danger of going over the top about anyone who makes it in Hollywood? Well, I reckon Postlethwaite just about lives up to the hype. He does possess an uncanny, jolt-laid screen magnetism. Remember his riveting performance as the ailing hand-leader in *Brassed Off*?

He also has the knack of making the most apparently irredeemable baddies human. He even managed to find traces of humanity in the brutal father in Terence Davies' *Distant Voices, Still Lives*, and in the sinister benchman Kobayashi from *The Usual Suspects*. The latter performance prompted *The New York Times* to observe: "Here's a guy with



Postlethwaite - 'It's not about classic good looks, but presence' - is a son caring for his stroke-stricken mother (Thora Hird) in *Lost for Words*

a false tan, a false accent, and a false name - and we still believe in him."

"As an actor, my greatest strength is weakness," Postlethwaite reckons. "I can play vulnerable. In *Titus Andronicus*, I played this complete and utter bastard who'd say: 'Off have I digged up dead men from their graves and stood them upright at their neighbours' doors, carving their names into their skins.' But then Shakespeare gives him a single scene with his baby, where he

says to the child: 'I'll feed you on roots and goats' milk and make you a soldier of men.' For that one flash, a window opens and everyone thinks: 'Actually, he's not all that bad.' When you've got a face like mine - which the principal of the Bristol Old Vic Drama School once said was like a stone archway - and you show some kind of compassion and empathy in it, then you can't go wrong. That's startling to audiences because it's not what they expect."

Asked to elaborate, Postlethwaite goes all transcendental. "That's like asking a centipede which leg it sets off with. If you're listening, you listen. If you're speaking, you speak. It's all terribly Zen. I've always really believed in that saying: 'When you understand... things are just as they are. When you don't understand... things are just as they are.'"

Lost for Words is an apt title for a Postlethwaite film as a large part of his appeal stems from his ability

to say things without speaking. In the affecting final scene, he sits quietly holding his mother's spectacles and ruminating on her life, as a bitter-sweet smile plays across his lips.

"He appears to be doing very little on screen," says Williams. "His face is very expressive and he has wonderful eyes (green!). He is so successful on film as he can communicate through a look, or the smallest turn of the head." Think of the menace he conveys with one

piercing gaze in *The Usual Suspects*. In the flesh, that stillness might be interpreted as sternness. He does have a reputation for being demanding. "He's a craftsman, and like all craftsmen he wants to get things absolutely right," Williams says by way of explanation. "If he makes demands, it's because he wants to use his craft to its absolute limit."

In the early 1990s, Postlethwaite was respected in the business but hardly setting the box-office alight. Bit parts in *The Bill* and *Casualty* do not a Hollywood big shot make. All that changed in 1993. The director Jim Sheridan was struggling desperately to find the right actor to play Daniel Day-Lewis's father in *In the Name of the Father*, when Day-Lewis said: "I know who my dad is." He put forward the little known Postlethwaite, an old mate from the Bristol Old Vic. An Oscar nomination swiftly followed, and Steven Spielberg was writing to express his admiration and offer meaty parts.

Postlethwaite has since become one of the busiest actors - in a three-year period only Harvey Keitel had played in more movies. But he concedes: "I've made mistakes. I don't think I could quite... 100 per cent endorse every film I've ever done."

Playing opposite a fire-breathing creature in *Dragonheart* may not have been one of his smartest career moves, and even the actor expresses doubts about *The Lost World: Jurassic Park*. "It was rather a good script, but that's not what we filmed. You're in a twilight zone when you go into that sort of blockbuster."

He's adamant Hollywood hasn't turned his head. Despite appearing in such big-budget movies as *Amistad* and *Alien 3*, he shuns big-city life - "I don't like London" - and still leads a quiet existence in rural Shropshire with his partner and two young children. When his agent tried to persuade him to change his hard-to-pronounce surname to something more media-friendly, he dropped the agent, not the name.

Postlethwaite will again be under a fierce spotlight with the release next year of *Among Giants*, in which he performs his debut "full monty" on screen. "I get to play my first romantic lead, and it involves a love scene [with Rachel Griffiths]. The scene was absolutely right, so I did it. Not bad really at 52. There are bonuses in this job. All the same, I did have all the normal worries because I don't think I'm one of those glamorous guys like Rock Hudson."

A smooth, dull Rock or a fascinating, craggy stone archway? I know which one I'd rather look at.

"*Lost for Words* is on ITV on Sunday, 3 January. *Among Giants* will be released next year."

Oops, there go my pantalons

INTERVIEWING BRIAN Rix on a recent edition of *Midweek*, Little Curves wondered if he was dismayed that, after all those years of heroic trouser-dropping for England, in any word-association game the term "farce" would still trigger the response "French". Not that our knowledge of Gallic ooh-la-la is particularly deep. A fair bit of Feydeau and a soupçon of Labiche is about as far as it goes. Mention the names of Maurice Hennequin and Pierre Veber, another pair of 19th-century Parisian farceurs, and there is unlikely to be a stampede of recognition, except perhaps up in Manchester where two of their plays had pioneering productions at the Royal Exchange. Sam Walters' delightful staging of *Court in the Act* at the Orange Tree suggests we would do well to rummage deeper in the back catalogue of this talented collaborative team.

THEATRE COURT IN THE ACT ORANGE TREE RICHMOND

The proceedings are given an immediate charm by the way Walters and his first-rate ensemble cheekily point up the fact that an in-the-round theatre like the Orange Tree is, in some ways, an incongruous space for a classic proscenium-stage farce.

In this genre of fast and disastrous exits and entrances, doors play a starring role, but they wouldn't look at all natural in a set-up where the actors have to dart in and out through the corner aisles.

The solution here is to make a droll feature of the fact that there is a very visible sound effects man at the side supplying the noises of slammed doors, creaking turnstiles, etc, to the cast's mimed actions. It

is a tactic that skillfully pulls the audience in to the idea of the play as an enchantingly elaborate contraption.

In *Court in the Act*, the Minister of Justice (Richard Heffer) declares that the legal system of the country has ground to a halt not by means of a revolution, but because of a beauty spot. The latter belongs to Lucy Tregear's seductive Gobette, a young musical star, who takes on a bet that she can conquer Tricointe, the fussy proper, self-important president of a provincial tribunal (David Timson). But an unscheduled visit from the Minister results in her bedding him, while having to pose as Tricointe's wife.

Will this ruin Tricointe or, as the reward for a hush-up, will it provide the back-door route to that longed-for promotion to Paris that has been barred to him thus far, he feels, by his scatty, low-born liability of a spouse, played by Auréli Smith?

With real wives and impostors ricocheting around the capital, his chances yo-yo dramatically. In one of the best running gags, a hapless minion at the Ministry (Paul Kemp), who is desperate to catch a train, has to redraft a contract no fewer than eight times.

Hennequin and Veber give the shenanigans a lovely spin with hilarious characters like Jeremy Crutchley's dim, conceited and accidentally suggestive bilingual policeman ("If you need any help, I have two tongues at your service") and Stuart Fox's excellent Marius, an old, bent snob of an usher at the Ministry who can't stand living in a republic and is therefore out to foil his unendurably non-aristocratic boss.

A sort of *Oui, Monsieur Le Ministre* on speed, this is a total treat.

PAUL TAYLOR

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Good Hook, but no catch

THE JOYS of J.M. Barrie's *Peter Pan* lie in the way it offers a lingering look at a state of childish innocence: its pains derive from the fact that, for better or worse, once gone that state can never be reclaimed. The depressing thing about John Caird and Trevor Nunn's version, directed by Fiona Laird, is that, for all its lavish display, it admits defeat so easily offering a description of childhood that is often muddled and embarrassed.

THEATRE PETER PAN NATIONAL THEATRE LONDON

themselves through the nursery window.

Somewhere in the clouds, though, the show takes a wrong turning. John Napier's Never Land set, a rotating island groaning under the weight of its landscaped layers, resembles a CenterParcs kind of idyll. Far more troubling is the portrayal of the Lost Boys by actors who look well past the first flush of youth. Their faces smeared, their fully grown bodies covered in imitation skins, Pan's people ape the mannerisms of Edwardian crybabies rather than adventurous young shavers.

This exaggerated infantilism is unwelcome in a play that delicately tackles the process of sexual maturation. Indeed, Wendy's presence as surrogate mother should be seen to stir in her young brood some-



David Troughton as Captain Hook with Justin Salinger as Peter Pan. Both villain and hero are lovable

thing more than fake-filial affection. Perhaps Laird imagines that the overacting sends up the widely spouted view of women as servants, but portraying the Lost Boys as mummies' boys robs them of the ordinariness that marks Peter Pan as different.

Justin Salinger's Pan conveys both the sadness of a none-too-splendid isolation and

the exuberance of boyhood, and David Troughton offers a redeeming blast of pantomime: leaping with assurance from fretful Mr Darling to the fiendishly arch pirate, basking in boos and hisses. Hero and villain are lovable, both. The problem lies with the company they keep.

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American immigrant Arshile Gorky was sidelined by Abstract Expressionism. Time for a reassessment? By Barèt Magarian

Through the eyes of a child

Arshile Gorky is one of the great enigmas of 20th century art. His influence has been vast and yet his name does not carry the weight of his contemporaries - Mark Rothko, Willem de Kooning, and Jackson Pollock. Born in 1902, he was raised in a provincial farming community in Western Armenia, and emigrated to America in 1920, where he later flourished in New York's bohemian circle, evolving into a brilliantly dynamic painter.

He survived the Armenian genocide that took place between 1915 and 1920 when the Ottoman Turks murdered, tortured and uprooted two million Armenians, raping their lands and destroying their culture. In New York he kept his past a secret to stifle its pain, and took the name of the Russian writer Maxim Gorky, whom he admired. His real name was Manoug Adoian.

Nouritza Matossian has written a profoundly moving, illuminating biography of the painter she spent 15 years researching. She is the only biographer of Gorky's who has had intimate access to his relatives and culture, having undertaken a pilgrimage to the site of his birthplace, now in present day Eastern Turkey.

Her visceral prose in *Black Angel - A Life of Arshile Gorky* conveys the magical, otherworldly aura of the village of Van where he grew up. She provides an intricate historical framework for the circumstances of his early life and the genocide. After bringing Gorky and his sister to safety their mother died of starvation during the famine that gripped Armenia in 1919. His work forever after paid tribute to her memory, in the most haunting way.

"The genocide shattered everything - it took away his mother, his home, his family. His way of dealing with it was by creating a new identity. He felt an immense debt to his mother because she was his greatest teacher and inspiration - not because she taught him art, but because of the way she looked at the world and made him sensitive to objects, nature and encouraged him to



paint and draw. His sister Vartouh told me how, after he'd finished it, he showed her the double portrait of *The Artist and his Mother* and said: 'Here's mum - you can talk to her now.' It was as if he was bringing her back to life."

Various commentators have discerned the influence of Picasso, Uccello, Ingres, and Miro in *The Artist and his Mother*, seeing it as a work of eclectic elegance. Matossian argues audaciously that the central inspirations were the frescoes of the Virgin and saints in the Church of the Holy Cross that were situated near to Gorky's childhood village.

"In addition to informing his work, the sacred art he had been saturated in as a boy made him reject the concept of commercial art. This ascetic seriousness struck a lot of the people around him, including de Kooning, who was very devoted to him and Rothko, whom Gorky taught for a short period."

"De Kooning always said that Gorky was the master. He delved back into the molten core of his memories and recast them via modern Western techniques."

His lofty moral view of art relates to the sense that emerges from the book of Gorky's self-imposed mission to vindicate the victims of the geno-

cide. While some of the mature paintings are conceived within its devastating orbit, others embody Gorky's life-affirming character and come close to being works of sheer exuberance. Colours dance, and shapes and structures appear to be in a state of motion as he captures the flux of experience in associative, kaleidoscopic webs. But the purity of Gorky's approach to art was to consign him to neglect.

"He didn't care about selling things; he gave away paintings very readily. He tried to get a dealer, but it wasn't what was important to him. And because he died young there was no one around to promote his work. No one was really pushing him and making sure the exhibitions were going ahead. The other reason he isn't more well known was because a lot of people thought that Abstract Expressionism necessarily led to the kind of work that Pollock and others ended up doing. Gorky didn't go down the same route, so people thought he was stuck in the past. I think this is a completely erroneous view. He was pursuing his own culturally authentic agenda; and there is a sensitivity and finesse in his work that is totally original in American art. No one else painted in the way Gorky did."

Towards the end, Gorky's life was prised apart by misfortunes that seemed eerily to link with the traumas of his childhood. A fire destroyed many of his paintings; he lost his wife to the Chilean artist Matta Echeurren; his body was decimated by cancer. In the end, at the age of 46, he gave up the struggle, and took his own life.

Despite the darkness of Gorky's life Matossian's account is paradoxically enlivening as she tells his story with an almost novelistic intensity. Her book finally leaves us with the image of a man of monumental will and spirit, who embraced life with every fibre, and whose sufferings never undermined his integrity either as a man or as an artist.

'Black Angel - A Life of Arshile Gorky' is published by Chatto and Windus, £25.



Main picture: 'The Artist and his Mother' by Arshile Gorky; left: Nouritza Matossian

In every home a headache

As Christmas approaches, an exhibition in Edinburgh offers a fresh take on the ghosts of festivities past: nostalgia and claustrophobia. By Elisabeth Mahoney

IT'S ALL Perry Como's fault. And Bing Crosby's. Andy Williams's and Val Doonican's while we're on the subject. For they brought us the definitive, ultra-cheesy Christmas Specials, with their families (or were they from Renton, I always wondered) gathered round piles of roaring chestnuts. They never looked like the folk we mostly surround ourselves with for the annual turkey-fest: in perennial soft-focus they beamed, so chuffed to see one another - they never overdid it on the sherry, argued or fell asleep in front of the telly.

At this time of year, the complicated reality of family life looms large as we contemplate visits home to our nearest and should-be dearest. All the mixed feelings this prospect may trigger - that strange blend of nostalgia, security and claustrophobia - are touched upon in *Family*. This is a fascinating group show of work by artists largely associated with the YBA phenomenon (but don't let that put you off: Damien Hirst, Georgina Starr, Rachel Whiteread, Gary Hume, and many others. It's no insult to the art to say that the star of the show is the setting, Inverleith House.

A private family residence until the late Fifties, it's a grand old place in the middle of Edinburgh's Royal Botanic Gardens, with fabulous views over the city to the Castle. As a gallery it has enviable light, space and serenity, but for this show it has the special distinction of having also been a home. You half expect to meet the ghosts of Christmases past on the stairs.

For *Family*, those ghosts have been stirred from their slumber, with the original domestic use of each room playfully revived and no labelling of work, to accentuate the atmosphere of a private house. In the drawing-room, there are seven drawings, hung along one wall, the wires left visible, highlighting the room's corning as much as the work itself. Apart from the works, the room is empty - as if to remind us that this use of space is now largely redundant. Not many of us have a room like this just for formal receptions.



It's no insult to say that Inverleith House is the star of the show

Sometimes this organisation of the work produces a quite magical effect. Best of all is the dining-room, an already calm white space, with huge windows that flood the room with weak, wintry sunlight. Here we find Callum Innes's white painting, *Resonance XII*, which through his trademark use of turpentine to remove patches of paint, looks like white gauze over a torn or scarred surface. In the centre of the room are six white chairs made by Simon Starling, copies of Eames chairs from the mid-Fifties, arranged around an invisible table. The room is like nostalgia itself - a tempting place to go, but there's always something missing; a resonance of the past is indeed all you ever get.

Next to the dining-room is the odd

little inner hall where Lisa Roberts's sound installation, a recording of a 15-minute walk through Central Park in New York, captures the muffled sound of conversations passing by, and the wild whistling wind. It draws attention to the in-between nature of this small space - not deep inside the house, but not outside; a space usually passed through quickly with just a glance at the view.

Richard Billingham's photograph of his mother, in his well known brutal realist style, renders the inner hall suddenly more claustrophobic, a place you could get trapped in.

Upstairs, in the traditionally private rooms, things are more dramatic. In the billiard room Billingham's father fixes himself a drink, looking like Steptoe in the

squalor of a kitchen specialising in liquid lunches. In one bedroom, it's about the attraction (or at least co-existence) of opposites - Whiteread's drawings of concave and convex beds, and Tatsuo Miyajima's red and green LED numerical display, *Opposite Harmony*: two screens of changing numbers, strangely compelling and calming to look at; in the other bedroom, a private moment of misery in Georgina Starr's video, *Crying*.

Maybe she got the wrong end of a cracker.

'Family' to 31 Jan at Inverleith House, Royal Botanic Gdns, Edinburgh (0131 348 2943). Open 10.30am-3.30pm, admission free. Closed 24-28 Dec, 28 Dec-1 Jan, and Mondays

THE INDEPENDENT COLLECTOR

JOHN WINDSOR'S GUIDE TO COLLECTING CONTEMPORARY ART
THIS WEEK: LAWRIE SIMONSON

ANOTHER BUG - but quite unlike last week's computer-generated print of a ladybird, Lawrie Simonson trained as a graphic designer, but balked at computer imaging and took a course in welding at his local poly. Now, at 48, he is Britain's foremost junk sculptor.

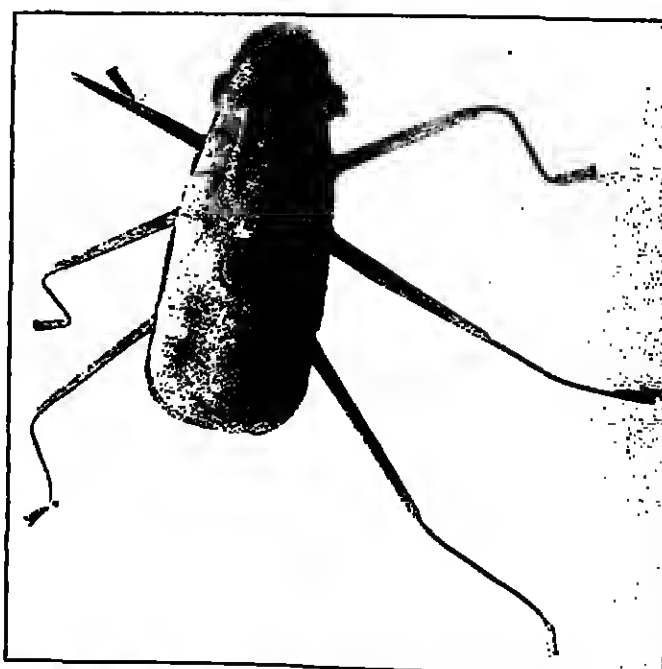
His water beetle, shown here, is 2ft tall and weighs 12lb. Its body is a discarded car exhaust, its legs are iron rods, bent in a vice. The realistic feet have been welded on.

It is lurching slightly to one side, as water beetles do. Simonson observes them and other water creatures, lying on his tummy on the banks of ponds and lakes on Hampstead Heath, Hadley Woods and Trent Park. Beetles that venture into his kitchen find themselves being scrutinised for half an hour on the table, before being released into the garden.

The trouble with most junk sculpture is that it looks like, well, junk. But Simonson, who has a season ticket to London Zoo and his own library of natural history textbooks, sees particular species of animals hidden in every piece of junk he claps eyes on. This is what distinguishes him from run-of-the-mill junk sculptors, who are content to make wonky tables and chairs, or abstracts, or batches of the same well-worn idea - garden rakes as birds, for example.

Simonson is better known on the Continent than here. The Continentals are into junk art. They hold two-day junkfests attended by 10,000 people at which chosen artists, mainly from Europe, are confronted with a mountain of junk and told to get on with it.

Simonson's metal insects and birds were a hit at Drap Art in Barcelona and Braderie de l'Art in Roubaix, France, both in 1997. In Barcelona, in a marquee outside the Museum of Modern Art, 100 artists hammered, sawed and welded for two days. Roubaix was even more frenetic: only 24 hours



Water beetle - from a car exhaust and iron rods

were allowed for creating junk masterpieces. "I hardly had time to eat," he says.

Although 90 per cent of each of Simonson's sculptures is junk, it is his sensitively modelled additions that bring them to life - the beetle's swaying legs, for example, or the head of a curlew modelled from motorists' plastic padding, its body being the discarded head of a spade.

He found the beetle's body in a pile of 20 other worn-out exhaust pipes at an exhaust replacement centre in Archway, north London. "The man there looked at me as if I were mad," he says. But the staff at supermarkets in Soho's Chinatown have a more charitable view of the sculptor. They are flattered whenever he buys a shiny new colander or ladle - ideal for the thorax and head of insects - thinking that he has taken to Chinese cooking in a big way.

His dog's head is a water pump from a car engine, its stubby tail is a wood drill and its straight legs are the metal

supports for system-hull shelving. This is not just any old dog. It's a fox terrier.

The roof of Simonson's studio in Camden Town is a menagerie of creatures that have been scrubbed clean with wire wool, then left to acquire the patina that rain and rust bring.

What does he like most about all of his clinking, clanking creatures? "It's the humour," he says.

In the past 16 years Simonson has made about 50 junk creatures and has had five corporate and public commissions, including nine sculptures - birds, insects and a mobile of a mythological sailing ship - that are on show in the Tudor Barn of Hainault Forest Country Park. His last solo show was the Millennium Bug Show at the gallery 51 Poland Street, central London, last month. A selection of his sculptures is permanently on display at the Jelly Leg'd Chicken Arts Gallery in Reading, Berkshire (0118-950 7926). Prices range from £500 to £2,000.

HEALTH

Half the people who read this article will probably be suffering from a cold. Yet last month, the Common Cold Centre admitted there is still a long battle ahead to find a cure for the world's most common illness. By Emma Cook

Still fighting the cold war

Fifty years from now, no doubt, cancer will be controllable, heart disease a distant memory and we'll all have clones for organ transplants. But you can bank on it that even in 2050 we'll still be sniffing, coughing and sneezing our way through the rest of the century.

It is almost as if the doctors have given up trying to find a cure. Ten years ago, the famous Cold Cure Unit in Salisbury closed its doors, partly because their extended trials just didn't find anything conclusive.

Now is when we need it most - the cold is the most prevalent disease among humans. Every day, about 50 million people worldwide wake up with one. Around 400,000 people will have a cold today, and this week probably half your office will have one. During an average lifespan (75 years), we'll catch around 210 colds - each lasting five or six days. On average, we each spend three years of our lives coughing and sneezing.

So why do these generally harmless infections cause so much discomfort? The virus itself causes only tiny pinpricks of damage to the lining of the nose. The symptoms of a cold are caused by our immune system which triggers the disinfecting process - coughing, runny nose - to wash away the virus.

These days, most research is carried out in other countries, even though the common cold feels like a British institution in itself. If the symptoms are, the cure certainly won't be; last month we heard that after 10 years and £5m of research, including the painstaking construction of a 2ft high model of a cold virus, the head of the Common Cold Centre had finally admitted defeat. "I don't foresee a cure in which we eradicate all the viruses," said Professor Ronald Eccles, the director of the centre at University of Wales, Cardiff. "I think the best we can hope for is to live at peace with it."

The centre has tested a large number of potential cold cures, including high-tech anti-viral agents, and so far none of them look set to eradicate the cold for ever. Instead, doctors are starting to agree that maybe lifestyle and diet could hold



We each spend, on average, three years of our lives coughing and sneezing. The best way to fight the virus seems to be a healthy lifestyle and diet Ed Sykes

the key. Certainly, stress plays a part. Research has shown that worrying about an infection can make the symptoms more severe, weakening the immune system because the brain thinks the bug is actually worse than it really is.

As we approach the end of the century, viruses are really coming into their own; mutating, dividing and growing more resistant by the decade. As Eccles says: "The trouble is that there are more than 200

different viruses which cause colds. Finding a single cure is like trying to cure measles, chickenpox, mumps and rubella all at once.

The other obstacle is that most colds don't last long enough for doctors to prove whether the drugs have really attacked the virus that caused them. Dr Karl Nicholson, senior lecturer at the Leicester Royal Infirmary, says: "By and large, they're short lived infections, so you've got to have a drug that gets

to the virus very quickly. It's very difficult to show that you've cut an infection from two days to one day, and much easier to prove if the symptoms last for, say, six weeks and your drugs cut it to three."

Nicholson specialises in flu viruses rather than common colds - the two might seem similar but there are important differences. Whereas the cold is a minor form of upper respiratory illness, flu tends to affect the lower respiratory area, the

chest, and is generally a more serious virus. It also seems more likely that they'll find a cure for it. According to Dr Nicholson, there are several on their way. "There have been some important developments in the last five years."

In particular, a new flu cure that stops the virus spreading in the body by blocking the action of neuraminidase, an enzyme the virus relies on to infect new cells. Glaxo has applied for a licence following trials

of more than 2,000 patients in Britain and worldwide.

But the cure doesn't help cold sufferers, who will just have to wait for their miracle cure. Wrapping up warm, drinking plenty of fluids, and staying in bed still seems to be the safest and most beneficial remedy. Or you can choose from one of the "symptom relievers" below, and kid yourself that they really work. As Professor Eccles says: "Never underestimate the power of a placebo."

Comfort but no cure from pills and potions

ANTIBIOTICS
Far too many antibiotics are prescribed unnecessarily for colds and flu viruses. In a recent US survey, 60 per cent of patients seen by GPs for a common cold were given some sort of antibiotic. Another study, in Switzerland, found that antibiotics were effective only in 10 per cent of patients who had bacterial complications, which is the only reason any antibiotics should be prescribed.

ASPIRIN
Another symptom-reliever, which reduces fever. "Gargling soluble aspirin can also help sore throats,

acting like an anaesthetic," says Roger Odd, who does warn against giving aspirin to children under 12 years old. In rare cases, it can cause Reye's syndrome in younger people, causing brain and liver damage. Many GPs prefer paracetamol, which also reduces feverish symptoms.

STEAM INHALATION
The oldest remedy around. It's widely believed that breathing in steam from a bowl or jug can ease the soreness and discomfort of a cold. It is cheap and safe and some people find it helpful, though

there's no solid evidence to back up the belief.

ECHINACEA
This herbal treatment based on root extracts is an increasingly popular remedy, and supposedly boosts the immune system. In a recent German trial, though, there were no significant differences between those who took it and those who were given a placebo. Professor Eccles is still keen to see more research carried out. "The widespread usage of echinacea preparations for many different infections supports the case for further analysis," he says.

VITAMIN C
Over the last 30 years, there has been a glut of studies examining the effectiveness of vitamin C. A recent overview of the research suggests that this vitamin does appear to decrease the symptoms of the common cold by an average of 23 per cent. Roger Odd says: "There is some proof it fights against the initial infection, but there's no real evidence that it can make you better once you've caught a cold."

ZINC
This is another remedy that doesn't really target the virus itself. Like vitamin C, it should be taken regularly to

protect from an infection - by the time a cold starts it's probably too late. In eight recent trials, four showed a benefit and the other four didn't. Some people swear by its properties, although the exact mechanism through which zinc affects the common cold remains unclear.

ANTIHISTAMINES
Available in tablets, capsules or spray. Speak to a pharmacist about which one to use - there are ones designed specifically for certain symptoms, such as a blocked nose. According to a recent US study, these are one of the most effective

symptom relievers - "significantly" reducing sneezing and runny nose - rhinorrhoea. Roger Odd, head of professional and scientific services at the Royal Pharmacy Society, says, "These can ease but not cure your symptoms. Don't overuse them - your body can build up resistance to them."

CAMPBOR RUBS
There are various decongestant vapours that stimulate the nasal passages, such as the menthol-and-eucalyptus-based Vicks VapoRub, and oil of eucalyptus. Old-fashioned but soothes symptoms.

The origin of specious argument

WE'RE now so slack intellectually that any old speculation can be peddled out in the media as science, if it is blessed with the label "evolutionary" or "genetic".

This is partly because evolutionary research nearly always upholds the right-wing world view adhered to by 90 per cent of the press. A new study claiming a "gene for" depression or being gay is far more likely to attract column inches or television documentary coverage than one indicating a major causal influence of class, gender bias or parental care on our psychology.

A fine example is a social psychological text published earlier this year, *Wednesday's Child* by Antonia Bifulco and Patricia Moran (Routledge). Thus far, the sole attention it has attracted is one brief news report in this newspaper.

Complete with accessible case studies, the book describes the results of four studies that have been undertaken over the last 30 years of the social origins of depression in women, funded by

the Medical Research Council at Royal Holloway and Bedford New College, London University.

Previous publications from the same research unit have provided by far the most influential and important demonstration of the causes of depression, evidence of infinitely greater significance than anything produced by geneticists before or since: in a sample of 453 women, those with a low income (23 per cent) were far more likely to be depressed than those with a high income (6 per cent) - a finding that has been replicated in nine further studies world-wide.

To a jaded media executive the fact that being poor puts women at much greater risk of depression is of almost no interest. But *Wednesday's Child* moves the story on to a new level by explaining why some low-income women become depressed, but not others; the reason is quality of care during childhood.

Bifulco and her colleagues interviewed 500 women about whether they had been neglected or abused as children. One third of

those who had suffered one of these childhood adversities had been depressed in the 12 months before being interviewed, compared with only 12 per cent of women who had suffered no childhood problem. Equally striking, of the women who had suffered all these forms of childhood adversity together (neglect, sexual or other physical abuse), one half had been depressed in the last year.

To separate the direct impact of

childhood adversity from other influences, Bifulco examined the effects of four other factors that are known to be important: loss of a parent before the age of 16, parental conflict, parental psychiatric problems, and poverty.

As in previous studies, all these were strongly associated with depression in the adult women. However, this association was found only when coupled with neglect or abuse. If you had lost a parent, for example, or had disharmonious, poor or psychiatrically disturbed parents, it made you more likely to be depressed in adulthood only if you had also been abused or neglected. This research poses a major challenge to the genetic triumphalism that has swept our media.

Try reanalysing Bifulco's findings from the widely held assumption that depression is substantially caused by genetic factors. First of all, if depression is four times more common among poor women than in rich women does that mean that the poor have

much more "depressing" genes? There is not a scrap of evidence to support the idea, although it is theoretically possible.

Even if genes explain why the poor are more depressed, how come women who are neglected or abused are so much more likely to be depressed than those who are not? Surely, these are purely environmental experiences which have nothing to do with a girl's genetic make-up.

The genetic retort is that, yes, the neglect and abuse are environmental but perhaps the propensity to inflict them on children is genetic - that parents are born with genes that make them into neglectful or abusive parents. There is a small amount of evidence that parenting styles may be slightly influenced by genes but, taken overall, Bifulco's new book makes genetic explanations of depression seem a very long shot.

Far more likely is that genes play a negligible role in much depression and that being abused and neglected as a child is

depressing. Being poor - not bad genes - makes stressed-out parents more likely to be abusive and neglectful. This environmental explanation has the added practical attraction of suggesting that if we reduced the proportion of people being raised in poor and abusive or neglectful homes, the amount of adult depression would consequently decline.

Sadly, despite the potential significance of Bifulco's discoveries, they have attracted just one small newspaper report. Unlike, for example, the American evolutionary psychologist Steven Pinker, author of *How The Mind Works*, whose contribution to our understanding of human psychology is tiny by comparison, there have been no in-depth interviews with Bifulco and no lengthy articles commissioned from her.

Oliver James's *Britain on the Couch - Why We're Unhappier Compared With 1950 Despite Being Richer* is now available in paperback (Arrow, £7.99)

OLIVER JAMES



BRITAIN ON THE COUCH

Single sperm count

HEALTH CHECK



JEREMY LAURANCE

THE PUBLIC has no love for genetics. Manipulating the building blocks of life should, in the view of many, be off limits for scientists. There may be benefits from genetically modified food, even from cloning, but too much is at stake, ethically and in safety terms, to allow boffins free rein.

Strange, then, that the biggest genetic experiment of all - involving the birth of over 3,000 babies in the UK alone so far - is going on under our noses with barely a murmur of comment, let alone protest.

I am referring to ICSI - the injection of genetic material (in the form of a single sperm) into an egg to create an embryo. Its full title is Intracytoplasmic Sperm Injection and it is the fastest-growing method of in vitro fertilisation, according to the annual report of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority, published last week.

The race that all sperm are involved in from the moment they are deposited in the vagina to reach the egg may have a purpose - to weed out damaged sperm which could pass their defects to the next generation.

The act of sexual intercourse ensures a process of natural selection - a process over-ridden by ICSI.

What are the long-term consequences of tampering with nature in this way? No one knows. Some studies have suggested a slightly higher risk of congenital defects among ICSI babies, but others have shown no such increase.

One fear is that male children born by the method will inherit the infertility suffered by their fathers. Is a man's life ruined by the discovery that he cannot have children or is it an acceptable price for being born? Does he simply choose ICSI in his turn?

The HFEA has long been concerned by ICSI, but warnings of potential genetic consequences have zero impact. The desperate desire for a child guarantees they will be ignored.

The use of ICSI is almost certain to grow because success rates are now 40 per cent higher than with ordinary IVF. We have to face the fact that we are in the midst of the biggest genetic experiment in human history - and we will not know the outcome for another 50 years.

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MEDIA

New kids on the box

Jane Root, appointed controller of BBC 2 last week, joins a new generation of executives who are dominating the upper echelons of more egalitarian, meritocratic television networks. By Paul McCann

In 1979 the BBC aired a programme which is crucial to understanding the new generation of people who have taken over British television. It was an episode of *Arena*, edited by a 32-year-old called Alan Yentob, which took a look at the song "My Way". The programme was originally inspired by Sid Vicious's punk interpretation of the song and paid affectionate homage to a tune that was an icon of popular culture.

Jane Root, who was appointed controller of BBC 2 last week, says it is not only one of her favourite programmes, but that it was influential in the direction of her career, and that of Michael Jackson, the chief executive of Channel 4.

Root and Jackson are now in control of the higher-brow end of television and they started their career together. They made a programme about television called *Open Box* which led on to a series, *The Media Show*, for Channel 4.

"That episode of *Arena* took a popular cultural artefact and played around with it," says Root. "To people like me and Michael, it is the Daddy of all the television we later did." The reason that particular *Arena* is so popular with the new generation controlling television is that they, too, are the products of television, itself a popular artefact.

"I was telly-obsessed," says Root. "From keeping the entire family silent during *Star Trek* as a kid, to starting my own film society when I was at sixth-form college, I have always been a fan. We all have."

While Michael Jackson did Media Studies at the Polytechnic of Central London, Root studied International Relations at Sussex University. "But alongside my degree I spent all my time doing film studies and any other I could on any of the media."

Jane Root's appointment marks the way that people who grew up with television have now taken it over. They have replaced the generations whose roots were either Oxbridge and journalism or the world of variety theatre.

The Polytechnic of Central London's media studies course was one of the first in the country, when the discipline was still heavily influenced by the Sixties explosion in structuralism: television is being run now by people who learned first how to take it apart. That is why Root doesn't find it quite so surprising as the rest of us that two people who worked on the same television show 12 years ago have ended up running



MICHAEL JACKSON, 40
Education: Polytechnic of Central London. Way into TV: Organiser of lobby group for creation of Channel 4; became controller of BBC 2 in 1993, BBC 1 in 1996. Now: Chief executive of Channel 4



MAL YOUNG, 41
Education: Liverpool College of Art. Way into TV: Script-writer on 'Brookside'; head of Channel 5 drama. Now: BBC head of drama series



JANE ROOT, 41 Education: University of Sussex. Way into TV: Researcher at British Film Institute; set up independent production company Wall to Wall; joined BBC in 1996. Now: Controller of BBC 2

a television channel each. "Media studies hadn't quite taken off. People didn't think television was something you made programmes about. There had been the odd programme, but no serious look at it."

Mal Young, who became head of drama series at the BBC this year, has been a friend of Root's for 10 years and is part of the new generation at the top. "It's those of us from normal families who watched a lot of television in the Sixties and Seventies taking over."

If there is a new generation in charge of television there is a key factor in their success: the creation of Channel 4. Jackson and Root made *The Media Show* for Channel 4 before Jackson used the experience to join the BBC and Root formed her own production company, Wall to Wall, with

her business partner Alex Graham. Wall to Wall became one of Channel 4's biggest suppliers, but its importance, believes Root, lies in the way independent production companies gave access to television to outsiders for the first time. "What's interesting is that people in television now can have diverse careers."

They don't have to climb slowly through an organisation they only got into in the first place because of their background, she believes. Instead there are creative people in charge who have run their own businesses, as well as making programmes. There is also a class dimension to the change wrought by Channel 4 and the independents: Jane Root's father ran a gift shop, Michael Jackson's dad was a baker, Mal Young's father was a milkman, while the father of the controller of

BBC 1 and one-time head of factual at Channel 4, Peter Salmon, was a window cleaner. It is all a long way from the time when you met from your public school reading history at Cambridge was the way into the corporation.

"The independents have encouraged a meritocracy," says Mal Young. "I got my break through Phil Redmond and Mersey Television. It was possible to learn the skills and meet the right people. It became possible for people who had had normal jobs to get into television."

Jane Root agrees: "The BBC is a much more egalitarian place now. There is a sense that we have a more varied view of the world."

The BBC also has to get some credit for bringing on a more representative generation of managers. The promotion of Root shows it has

been particularly successful in bringing on women.

In 1990 the corporation looked at the number of women in senior positions and discovered that just 10 per cent of senior executives were women. The corporation set itself targets for all its levels of management and now has 29.1 per cent of senior executives who are women: the target it set itself is 30 per cent. It has already surpassed its target for senior managers.

"When I got my first job as an editor in radio I was the only woman at my level," says Jenny Abramsky, who was appointed director of radio last month. "I spent all my time in meetings full of men. For eight years as I took other jobs I remained the only woman. When I got pregnant I went to the personnel manager who dealt with my man-



SUE FARR, 42
Education: University of Reading. Way into TV: Marketing background; communications director for Thames TV. Now: Director of communications and marketing, BBC



PETER SALMON, 42
Education: University of Warwick. Way into TV: Newspaper reporter; head of factual at Channel 4. Now: Controller of BBC 1

agement grade and be had never had to deal with maternity leave before. It was because no one at that level had ever been pregnant before. There is still a long way to go, but there is a sense of momentum now."

Sue Farr, the BBC's head of communications and marketing, has been at the BBC five years and did not know there were targets for women in management. "You hear about a time when the only woman in a meeting was the one taking notes, but now broadcasting is so competitive that no organisations could possibly afford to promote on anything other than merit."

When Jane Root heard about her new job last week, one of the first calls of congratulation she took was from Mal Young: "He just said one thing to me: 'The lunatics have taken over the asylum.'"

THE WORD
ON THE
STREET

A POSTSCRIPT to our story last Friday, which questioned whether *The Guardian* acted with two MPs to name Dominic Lawson, the editor of *The Sunday Telegraph*, as an MI6 agent. We suggested that *The Guardian*'s interest might not be unconnected to Lawson's role when he was at *The Spectator* in getting Richard "KGB" Gott to quit *The Guardian*. "How dare you accuse us of holding a grudge," a *Guardian* employee warned. "We'll get you, you bastards."

IN CYBERSPACE, no one can hear you scream, particularly on the "Friends of Conrad Black" homepage, the loneliest corner of the Internet. But first you have to find it. The usual web directories reckon there are 648 sites devoted in whole or part to the Canadian media magnate. Crikey, no time to go through all those, so we settle for a quick blast from the "Conrad Black Waltz" site. A sample verse: "He rattles my cage/He pulls on my chain/He owns 100 per cent of my brain/It simplifies thinking/So I can't complain/I live under Conrad Black's reign." My name's Boris Johnson, goodnight.

RICHARD BRANSON seems to be having as much joy entering Chinese airspace as he is operating a rail franchise. Anyway, like the 08.17 to Manchester, we digress. The transport correspondent of one august broadsheet thought he would go to his paper's Christmas party as a Virgin Railways conductor. Virgin were only too willing to oblige. The uniform arrived - but too late to be any use.

Time for out with the old, and in with the new

After 30 years of success, 'Time Out', the Londoner's listings bible, is getting a revamped look and a different emphasis. By Rhys Williams

THE ACCUSATION periodically levelled at Tony Elliott, founder and publisher of *Time Out*, is that he has only ever had one good idea. If that is true, it was a better one than most of us will ever have.

Thirty years ago, Elliott invested in a single commodity called information, and his status as a millionaire international publisher is probably more a testament to its enduring value than the talents he has variously assembled on Tottenham Court Road.

The London listings weekly has just celebrated 30, mostly happy, years. It failed to spot the first year of punk and there was the strike over equal pay in 1981 which, like a bad dose of acne, kept the then teenager off the streets for a few months. However, for most of its history *Time Out* has been out there on its own, unchallenged, successful in a comfort zone of *de facto* monopoly.

But that is changing. There is a new editor, Vicky Mayer, talking about a fresh approach and there are nervous glances towards a quartet of thrusting young rival bibles - the listings supplements that now come free every week with *The Guardian*, *The Independent*, *The Times* and the *Evening Standard* represent 1 million copies of competition. From a

circulation high of 108,000 (special editions can sometimes top 130,000) four years ago, the last ABC saw *Time Out* slip to 98,000. The next return is expected to be lower.

The onset of middle age, and pulling power on the wane - time for a wholesale makeover, the magazine equivalent of a visit by Carol Smilie and the team from *Changing Rooms*: Elliott prefers to talk in terms of a "100,000-mile service" - change the plugs, clean the filter, new trends;

campaigning zeal that the *Standard* under Max Hastings appears to have misplaced. Its consumer service needs sharpening ("We screwed up the whole wallpaper, interior design boom"), its writing made more accessible ("for the benefit of the readers, rather than ourselves or other critics").

Above all, he says, *Time Out* London must learn from its younger sister in New York which, after just over three years, is selling 85,000 copies a week, and is close to breaking

News will help, but so will what he dubs "service journalism" - specials on specific areas of town, cheap eats, best bars and so on. "In my opinion a lot of editors care about it, but decide that somehow it's a bit boring for the reader, when in fact that's precisely what they want to keep."

A former features editor of *TV Times* and *Options*, Mayer, 34, launched *Inside Soap* magazine in 1992, took it from monthly to fortnightly, before going to Australia where she was editorial director of the antipodean equivalent of *Sugar*.

"Londoners don't all live in Notting Hill, work in advertising and earn 50 grand," she says. "Not everyone goes clubbing or to the cinema. They are eating, drinking and shopping. We need to reflect that without dumbing down. If there's a new gadget shop on Ken High Street, for instance, we need to write about it."

"There's also the reality that it's difficult to live in London, particularly for people in their early twenties. Rents are high and it's hard to get around, and that can put you off. We have to be writing about that, about transport, rents, unscrupulous landlords, how to get your deposit back. No other publication is campaigning on behalf of London at the moment."

'Not all Londoners live in Notting Hill, work in advertising, and earn 50 grand'

oh yes, and a new driver too. "I'm sort of happy with [*Time Out*]," he says. "But it needs a change, and the best way to do that is from outside. It just needs that fresh infusion of personality to wake everything up a little bit. Everyone interviewed said all the opening pages needed to be radically changed - we need to reflect more urgently what's happening in London."

Specifically, Elliott would like to see its news coverage expanded and infused with the

even. If there has been a criticism of the UK magazine in recent years it is that while it has been an excellent cultural handbook - often the first and most comprehensive word on what's new and where it can be seen - it has not necessarily reflected London life in the way that the American title smells of Manhattan. It may have been, in part, a media creation but it took two American publications *Newsweek* and *Vanity Fair* to realise that London was the centre of cool again.

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JOURNALIST

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To advertise in this section please call now on 0171 293 2691.

NEW FILMS

THE PRINCE OF EGYPT (U)
Director: Brenda Chapman, Simon Wells.
Voiced by: Val Kilmer, Ralph Fiennes, Michelle Pfeiffer.
DreamWorks honcho Jeffrey Katzenberg envisaged his cartoon Life of Moses "painted by Claude Monet and photographed by David Lean". The end result winds up as *The Ten Commandments* by way

of Joseph and his Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat. West End: ABC Tottenham Court Road, Phoenix Cinema, Plaza, Ritzy Cinema, Screen on the Hill, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Chelsea, Virgin Haymarket, Virgin Trocadero

GENERAL RELEASE

ANTZ (PG)
See *The Independent Recommends*, right.
West End: ABC Tottenham Court Road, Phoenix Cinema, Plaza, Ritzy Cinema, Screen on the Hill, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Chelsea, Virgin Haymarket, Virgin Trocadero

BABE: PIG IN THE CITY (U)
In the follow-up to *Babe*, knockabout comedy is kept to a minimum in favour of a bleak animatronic fairytale. West End: ABC Baker Street, ABC Tottenham Court Road, Clapham Picture House, Elephant & Castle Coronet, Hammersmith Virgin, Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Plaza, Rio Cinema, Ritzy Cinema, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Fulham Road, Virgin Trocadero

BLADE (18)
A techno soundtrack humps and grinds behind its monotonous arcade-game thriller about a New York vampire-killer tackling a power-crazed new bloodsucker. Noise and martial-arts action mask its tiny pedigree. West End: Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Trocadero, Warner Village West End

THE BOYS (18)
Out of jail after serving a sentence for GBH, oldest "boy" Brett Sprague (David Wenham) moves back into his mum's drab suburban home, terrorises his girlfriend and turns his younger brothers into petty henchmen. *The Boys* spotlights the downside of life Down Under - it's potent, predatory stuff. West End: Metro, Ritzy Cinema

DANCING AT LUGHNASSA (PG)
A dance, more of a trudge, this Ireland-set saga is given backbone by Meryl Streep's regal performance. West End: Curzon Mayfair, Notting Hill Coronet, Rio Cinema

DEAD MAN'S CURVE (15)
Writer-director Dan Rosen must have had some terrible experiences at university. All the students at his nameless American college are trying to butcher each other, led into temptation by an obscure regulation that awards straight-A grades to the room-mates of suicides. Though not as deliciously nasty as the *Scream* films, *Dead Man's Curve* delivers a respectable system of drive-in shocks. West End: ABC Piccadilly

ELIZABETH (15)
Shekhar Kapur's follow-up to *Bandit Queen* is the story of a female figurehead struggling to gain purchase in a male world. But Kapur largely neglects the opportunities for fun in a story of independence triumphing over cruelty. West End: ABC Tottenham Court Road, Odeon Haymarket, Odeon Mezzanine, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Virgin Fulham Road

FEAR: NO LOATHING IN LAS VEGAS (18)
William's adaptation fills at Ralph Steadman cartoonery for its tale of a drug-fueled journalistic assignment. The film soon descends into a carnival of narcotic lunacy, with one stand-out being Johnny Depp - who brings Hunter S. Thompson into bald-headed, pigeon-toed life. West End: ABC Baker Street, Empire Leicester Square, Odeon Camden Town, Ritzy Cinema, Virgin Haymarket

IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE (U)
See *The Independent Recommends*, right.
West End: Curzon Soho, Gate Notting Hill, Richmond Picturehouse, Ritzy Cinema

LEFT LUGGAGE (PG)
An uncertain soap opera, focusing on the ebbs and flows within a Basidic family in 1970s Holland. Fitful as drama, the film comes to life as a showcase for its high-profile performers plus rising star Laura Fraser. West End: ABC Swiss Centre, Curzon Minerva, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Phoenix Cinema, Richmond Picturehouse, Screen on Baker Street, Screen on the Hill

LOCK, STOCK AND TWO SMOKING BARRELS (18)
Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels follows the lead of Tarantino, but the film's defining characteristic is its resilient morality. West End: ABC Canton Street, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Warner Village West End

THE MASK OF ZORRO (PG)
This gaudy swashbuckler gallops full speed through 19th-century California in the company of Antonio Banderas's authentically Hispanic go-guano. A bite-sized history lesson on West Coast politics struggles amid a lot of colourful duels and clattering set-pieces. West End: Barbican Screen, Clapham Picture House, Elephant & Castle Coronet, Hammersmith Virgin, Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Leicester Square, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Ritzy Cinema, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Fulham Road

MULAN (U)
In Disney's animated feature, a girl disguises herself as a soldier to spare her ailing father from the certain death of combat. This set-up has got it all: a pro-active heroine who does not want to be a man or pet woodland animals; a strong father-daughter relationship; honour and nobility; and, of course, cross-dressing. It's also one of the most visually innovative movies that Disney has ever made. West End: Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Mezzanine, Odeon Swiss Cottage, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Chelsea, Warner Village West End

MY NAME IS JOE (15)
See *The Independent Recommends*, right.
West End: ABC Tottenham Court Road, Ritzy Cinema, Screen on Baker Street, Screen on the Hill, Virgin Chelsea, Virgin Haymarket

THE NEGOTIATOR (15)
Samuel L. Jackson and Kevin Spacey go head to head in Gray's thrilling drama. The script has a predilection for lunk-headed swearing that sounds uneasy in the mouths of such articulate, rhetorical performers. West End: Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Marble Arch, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Fulham Road, Virgin Trocadero, Warner Village West End

OUT OF SIGHT (15)
George Clooney plays the law-breaking hero as a down-and-dirty version of Cary Grant, and turns in the best performance of his career so far. He seems to be a grown-up film star when most of Hollywood's male heart-throbs don't look old enough to get served in a pub. West End: Clapham Picture House, Empire Leicester Square, Gate Notting Hill, Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Ritzy Cinema, Screen on Baker Street, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Chelsea, Virgin Trocadero

THE PARENT TRAP (PG)
The Parent Trap catches Disney cannibalising its own back catalogue, re-heating its 1961 Hayley Mills heart-warmer into a spry, cross-cultural caper starring Lindsay Lohan as the separated-at-birth twin sisters (one British, one American) determined to get their parents (Natalie Richardson, Dennis Quaid) back together. West End: Hammersmith Virgin, Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Odeon West End, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Chelsea

A PERFECT MURDER (15)
With Hollywood awash with dumb re-makes, the news that Hitchcock's classic *Dial M for Murder* was to be rehashed did not bode well. But this is gold-plated trash: the sort of thing Hollywood does better than anyone else. West End: ABC Canton Street, Warner Village West End

THE PHILADELPHIA STORY (U)
Sublime cinema. It's a fast-talking romantic comedy, of course, but there's nothing silly or trivial about it. George Clooney's movie has a strange and melancholy heart and Katherine Hepburn's unsatisfied heiress sheds real tears. West End: Curzon Soho, Renoir

PLAYING GOD (18)
Cracker director Andy Wilson suffers a rude lesson in Hollywood politics with this glossy but garbled thriller about a junkie doctor (David Duchovny) embroiled with a gang of counterfeiters headed by a hammy Tim Rutton. West End: Warner Village West End

RONIN (15)
See *The Independent Recommends*, right.
West End: Odeon Kensington, Odeon West End, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Fulham Road

RUSH HOUR (15)
Jackie Chan and Chris Tucker star in this hit-and-miss affair. West End: Elephant & Castle Coronet, Gate Notting Hill, Hammersmith Virgin, Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Plaza, Ritzy Cinema, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Chelsea, Virgin Trocadero, Warner Village West End

SLUMS OF BEVERLY HILLS (18)
See *The Independent Recommends*, right.
West End: ABC Piccadilly, ABC Shaftesbury Avenue

TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE (18)
Once ridiculously held up as a video nasty, Tobe Hooper's thrifft-shop chiller is, rather, a unholo celebration of the blood-thirsty urges within white-trash America, ushering a bunch of generic teens to their doom among a family of unemployed slaughtermen. Explicit violence is thin on the ground, instead it's the alien, voodoo mood which dominates. West End: ABC Shaftesbury Avenue

THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT MARY (15)
The latest comedy from the tasteless writer-director team of Peter and Bobby Farrelly. The film is basically a soft-centred romantic comedy of the kind that drifts out of Hollywood on a regular basis. The gags never amount to more than vulgar icing on an exceptionally bland cake. West End: Odeon Mezzanine, Screen on the Green, Virgin Fulham Road, Virgin Haymarket

VELVET GOLDMINE (18)
Jonathan Rhys Meyers plays a Bowie-esque idol in glitter make-up, his friend and mentor Curt Wild (Ewan McGregor) is a self-destructive US rocker in the Lou Reed-Iggy Pop mould. The story of how these characters are bound together is told in a film brimming with intelligent ideas. West End: Curzon Soho, Rio Cinema

LA VIE REVEE DES ANGES (THE DREAM LIFE OF ANGELS) (18)
Isa (Clodie Bouchet) is a gamine but impoverished drifter who meets Marie (Natacha Regnier) while tempting at a clothes sweatshop. They become friends and move in together in a stunning first feature for Erick Zanca. West End: ABC Swiss Centre, Curzon Minerva, Phoenix Cinema, Screen on the Green

THE WISDOM OF CROCODILES (15)
Jude Law plays a contemporary vampire who wines and dines his victims before he goes for the jugular. West End: ABC Canton Street

THE INDEPENDENT RECOMMENDS

THE FIVE BEST FILMS

My Name is Joe (15)
All that one would expect from a Ken Loach film - humour, indignation and emotional sympathy - driven by scarily intense performance by Peter Mullan (right) as a recovering alcoholic.



Antz (PG)

Computer-animated comedy voiced by a stellar cast headed by Woody Allen as a worker ant who becomes an unlikely opponent of the colony's totalitarian regime. Good fun, and Allen's best work in a while.

Slums of Beverly Hills (15)

Tamara Jenkins's feature debut is a modest but winning rite-of-passage movie about a family coping with poverty in LA's richest suburb. Alan Arkin gives an acting masterclass as the dad.

Ronin (15)

John Frankenheimer's action thriller is buttressed by a fine international cast (Robert De Niro, Jean Reno, Stellan Skarsgard), moody French locations and a clutch of supercharged car chases.

It's a Wonderful Life (U, Curzon Soho)

Despite its reputation as a national treasure, Frank Capra's hymn to small-town selflessness is fraught with all kinds of contradictions and blind spots. James Stewart, granted a vision of how life would have been had he never been born, is magnificent in the lead role.

ANTHONY QUINN

THE FIVE BEST PLAYS

Martin Guerre

West Yorkshire Playhouse, Leeds
It's third time lucky for this much-rewritten Bouhli/Schönberg musical. In Connal Morrison's starkly involving production, it finally emerges as a higher, magnificent show. To 13 Feb

The Invention of Love

Theatre Royal, Haymarket
Witty fantasia by Tom Stoppard on the twin passions of AE Housman: scholarship and an unavailable heterosexual friend. To 4 Apr

Hindle Wakes

Royal Exchange, Manchester
After its spectacular refurbishment following the 1996 bombing, the theatre houses back to life in fine resilient form with this excellent production (right), which had to be aborted then. To 9 Jan



Copenhagen

Cottesloe, National Theatre
Michael Frayn's profound and haunting meditation on science, morality and the mysteries of human motivation. To 27 Jan

The Boy Who Fell Into a Book

Stephen Joseph Theatre, Scarborough
Typically witty and ingenious concept from Alan Ayckhourn - here wearing his children's dramatist hat. To 9 Jan

PAUL TAYLOR

THE FIVE BEST SHOWS

Louise Bourgeois Serpentine Gallery
Veteran French-American sculptress, still a leading light at 87, shows new installations in which a giant mother/spider presides over images of spinning and weaving, restoration and decay. To 10 Jan

Edward Burne-Jones

Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery
This centenary exhibition gathers together many old favourites (right) illustrating Burne-Jones's romantic and medievalist nether world. To 17 Jan



Claude Lorrain

British Museum
One hundred drawings by the great French classical landscape painter, including his remarkably vivid outdoor studies of woods and streams. To 10 Jan

Bridget Riley

Abbott Hall, Kendal
A small retrospective, spanning the career of top British abstractionist Riley - from the shimmering monochromes of her early Sixties Op Art fame, to colour, stripes, diagonals and curves. To 31 Jan

Chris Ofili Whitworth Gallery, Manchester

The 1998 Turner Prize winner is an upheaval original, his surfaces dense and decorative, with swirls of dots, eyes, Afros and black icons, and incorporating mutant balls of elephant dung. To 24 Jan

TOM LUBROCK

CINEMA

WEST END

ABC BAKER STREET
(0870 9020418) @ Baker Street
Babe: Pig in the City 12.00pm, 2.00pm, 4.00pm, 6.00pm, 8.00pm
The Prince of Egypt 1.40pm, 4pm, 6.20pm, 8.35pm

ABC PANTON STREET
(0870 902 0404) @ Piccadilly
Circus The Last Days of Disco 1.10pm, 3.40pm, 6pm, 8.25pm
Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels 1.10pm, 3.35pm, 6pm, 8.30pm
A Perfect Murder 1.10pm, 3.35pm, 6pm, 8.30pm
The Wisdom of Crocodiles 1.10pm, 3.30pm, 6pm, 8.30pm

ABC PICCADILLY
(0171-287 4322 (from 1pm))
@ Piccadilly Circus
Dead Man's Curve 4.05pm, 8.45pm
Hannibal 1.10pm, 3.35pm, 6pm, 8.30pm
The Mask of Zorro 1.10pm, 3.35pm, 6pm, 8.30pm

ABC SHAFTESBURY AVENUE
(0870 902 0402) @ Leicester Square
Slums of Beverly Hills 1.05pm, 3.25pm, 7.05pm, 9.05pm
Texas Chainsaw Massacre 1.35pm, 3.55pm, 6.35pm, 8.30pm

ABC SWISS CENTRE
(0870 902 0403) @ Leicester Square/Piccadilly
Circus Angel Sharks 1.30pm, 3.25pm, 5.20pm, 7.15pm, 9.10pm
The Governor 1.45pm, 4.05pm, 6.25pm, 8.45pm
Left Luggage 1.30pm, 6.55pm
Rien Ne Va Plus 4.45pm, 9.15pm
La Vie Revee des Anges 1.25pm, 3.45pm, 6.05pm, 8.25pm

ABC TOTTENHAM COURT ROAD
(0870 902 0414) @ Tottenham Court Road
Antz 1.15pm, 6.35pm
Babe: Pig in the City 1.05pm, 3.40pm, 6.20pm, 8.30pm
Elizabeth 3.30pm, 8.55pm
My Name is Joe 6.25pm, 9.05pm
The Prince of Egypt 1.20pm, 3.50pm, 6.50pm, 9.30pm

BARBICAN SCREEN
(0171-638 8891) @ Barbican
The Mask of Zorro 3pm, 6pm, 8.40pm
The Prince of Egypt 3pm, 5.30pm, 8pm

CHELSEA CINEMA
(0171-351 3742) @ Sloane Square
On Connaught Lane 1.30pm, 3.30pm, 6pm, 8.35pm

CLAPHAM PICTURE HOUSE
(0171-498 3323) @ Clapham Common
Babe: Pig in the City 1.45pm, 4.15pm, 6.45pm
The Mask of Zorro 1.45pm, 4.15pm, 6.45pm
Elizabeth 3.30pm, 8.55pm
My Name is Joe 6.25pm, 9.05pm
The Prince of Egypt 1.20pm, 3.50pm, 6.50pm, 9.30pm

CURZON MAYFAIR
(0171-369 1720) @ Green Park
Dancing at Lughnassa 2pm, 4.15pm, 6.30pm, 9pm

CURZON MINERVA
(0171-369 1723) @ Hyde Park Corner
Left Luggage 2.50pm, 6.50pm
La Vie Revee des Anges 4.40pm, 8.40pm

CURZON SOHO
(0171-734 2255 (12pm-6pm))
@ Leicester Square/Tottenham Court Road
The El 1.30pm, 3.45pm
Henry Fool 4.10pm, 9pm
It's a Wonderful Life 1pm, 6.30pm
The Last Days of Disco 2.15pm, 9.30pm
The Philadelphia Story 12noon, 4.30pm, 7pm
Velvet Goldmine 3.30pm, 9.15pm

ELPHANT AND CASTLE CORONET
(0171-703 4968) @ Elephant & Castle
The Mask of Zorro 1.50pm, 3.45pm
The Prince of Egypt 1.30pm, 4pm, 6.20pm, 8.35pm
Rush Hour 1.30pm, 4pm, 6.30pm, 8.50pm

EMPIRE LEICESTER SQUARE
(0950-888990) @ Leicester Square
Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas 12.40pm, 3.30pm, 6.10pm, 9pm
Out of Sight 12.10pm, 2.55pm, 5.50pm, 8.35pm
The Prince of Egypt 10.45am, 1pm, 3.30pm, 6pm, 8.30pm

GATE NOTTING HILL
(0171-727 4043) @ Notting Hill Gate
It's a Wonderful Life 4.10pm (+ Short: Whoosh) Out of Sight 1.40pm, 6.40pm
Rush Hour 9.05pm

HAMMERSMITH VIRGIN
(0870-907 0718) @ Ravenscourt Park/Hammersmith
Babe: Pig in the City 12noon, 2.20pm, 4.20pm
Enemy of the State 6.20pm, 9pm

LEICESTER SQUARE
(0870-907 0718) @ Leicester Square
Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas 12.40pm, 3.30pm, 6.10pm, 9pm
Out of Sight 12.10pm, 2.55pm, 5.50pm, 8.35pm
The Prince of Egypt 10.45am, 1pm, 3.30pm, 6pm, 8.30pm

LEICESTER SQUARE
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Out of Sight 12.10pm, 2.55pm, 5.50pm, 8.35pm
The Prince of Egypt 10.45am, 1pm, 3.30pm, 6pm, 8.30pm

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Out of Sight 12.10pm, 2.55pm, 5.50pm, 8.35pm
The Prince of Egypt 10.45am, 1pm, 3.30pm, 6pm, 8.30pm

LEICESTER SQUARE
(0870-907 0718) @ Leicester Square
Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas 12.40pm, 3.30pm, 6.10pm, 9pm
Out of Sight 12.10pm, 2.55pm, 5.50pm, 8.35pm
The Prince of Egypt 10.45am, 1pm, 3.30pm, 6pm, 8.30pm

LEICESTER SQUARE
(0870-907 0718) @ Leicester Square
Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas 12.40pm, 3.30pm, 6.10pm, 9pm
Out of Sight 12.10pm, 2.55pm, 5.50pm, 8.35pm
The Prince of Egypt 10.45am, 1pm, 3.30pm, 6pm, 8.30pm

THE MASK OF ZORRO 12noon, 3pm, 6pm, 9pm
The Parent Trap 12.10pm, 3pm, 5.50pm, 8.40pm
The Prince of Egypt 12.15pm, 2.20pm, 4.30pm, 6.30pm, 8.30pm
Rush Hour 6.30pm, 9pm

ICA CINEMA
(0171-930 3647) @ Charing Cross
Palombella Rossa 7pm, 9pm
Le Voyage Imaginaire 6.30pm, 8.30pm (+ Short)

METRO
(0171-734 1506) @ Piccadilly
Circus/Leicester Square The Boys 1pm, 3.30pm, 6pm, 8.30pm
Fire 2pm, 4.15pm, 6.30pm, 8.45pm

NOTTING HILL CORONET
(0171-727 6705) @ Notting Hill Gate
Dancing at Lughnassa 2.30pm, 4.30pm, 6.30pm, 8.45pm

ODEON CAMDEN TOWN
(08705-050007) @ Camden Town
Babe: Pig in the City 1.15pm, 1.55pm, 3.55pm
The Mask of Zorro 11.50am, 2.40pm, 5.40pm, 8.30pm
Mulan 12.05pm
The Negotiator 5.30pm, 8.25pm
Out of Sight 5.55pm, 8.40pm

ODEON KENSINGTON
(08705-050007) @ High Street
Kensington Babel Pig in the City 1.15pm, 3.55pm
The Mask of Zorro 2.25pm, 5.40pm, 8.55pm
Out of Sight 12.20pm, 3.20pm, 6.20pm, 9.20pm
The Parent Trap 2.20pm, 3pm, 6.05pm, 9.10pm
The Prince of Egypt 12.05pm, 3.05pm, 6.05pm, 9.05pm

ODEON LEICESTER SQUARE
(08705-050007) @ Leicester Square
The Mask of Zorro 11.40pm, 2.30pm, 5.25pm, 8.20pm

ODEON MARBLE ARCH
(08705-050007) @ Marble Arch
Babe: Pig in the City 1.15pm, 3.05pm
The Mask of Zorro 11.50pm, 2.50pm, 5.55pm, 9pm
The Negotiator 8.55pm
Out of Sight 8.55pm
The Parent Trap 8.55pm
The Prince of Egypt 12.15pm, 3.05pm, 6.05pm, 9.05pm

ODEON MEZZANINE
(08705-050007) @ Leicester Square
Elizabeth 1.35pm, 8.20pm
Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels 1.25pm, 3.55pm, 6.20pm, 8.45pm
Les Misérables 2.35pm, 5.30pm, 8.15pm
Mulan 2.10pm, 4.20pm
Snake Eyes 6.25pm, 8.35pm
There's Something About Mary 12.45pm, 3.15pm, 5.45pm, 8.20pm

ODEON SWISS COTTAGE
(08705-050007) @ Swiss Cottage
Babe: Pig in the City 1.25pm, 3.45pm
Elizabeth 3.30pm
Left Luggage 6.25pm, 8.45pm
The Mask of Zorro 1.40pm, 4.55pm, 8pm
Mulan 12.45pm
Out of Sight 3pm, 5.25pm, 8.20pm
The Parent Trap 12.15pm, 3.05pm, 5.45pm, 8.30pm
Ronin 12.35pm, 3.10pm, 5.45pm, 8.20pm

ODEON WEST END
(08705-050007) @ Leicester Square
The Parent Trap 12.15pm, 3.05pm, 5.45pm, 8.30pm
Ronin 12.35pm, 3.10pm, 5.45pm, 8.20pm

PEPSI MAX CINEMA
(0171-494 4153) @ Piccadilly
Circus Everest 12.35pm, 2.40pm, 4.45pm, 7pm, 9.05pm
T-Rex: Back to the Cretaceous (3-D) 11.30am, 1.35pm, 3.40pm, 5.45pm, 8pm, 10.05pm

PHOENIX CINEMA
(0181-444 6789) @ East Finchley
Antz 12pm
Left Luggage 1.50pm
La Vie Revee des Anges 4.05pm, 6.30pm, 8.55pm

PLAZA
(0950-888990) @ Piccadilly
Circus Antz 1.15pm, 3.30pm
Babe: Pig in the City 12.45pm, 3.10pm, 5.30pm
Rush Hour 1.30pm, 4pm, 6.30pm, 8.50pm

SAVING PRIVATE RYAN 7.50pm
The Truman Show 6pm, 8.30pm
Twilight 1pm, 3.45pm, 6.15pm, 8.40pm

RENOIR
(0171-837 8402) @ Russell Square
On Connaught Lane 1.30pm, 3.30pm, 6pm, 8.35pm
The Philadelphia Story 1.30pm, 3.55pm, 6.20pm, 8.45pm

RIO CINEMA
(0171-254 6677) @ Dalsdon
Kingdome Babe: Pig in the City 2pm, 4.15pm, 6.30pm
Dancing at Lughnassa 8.45pm

RITZY CINEMA
(0171-733 2229) @ Brick Lane
Antz 12.05pm, 2.05pm
Babe: Pig in the City 12.10pm, 2.25pm, 4.25pm
The Boys Trap East Side Story 2.45pm
Ever After 10.30am
Eve's Bayou 6.35pm
It's a Wonderful Life 4.15pm (+ Short: Whoosh)
The Mask of Zorro 3.30pm, 6.15pm
Miracle On 34th Street (1994 Version) 10.30am
The Prince of Egypt 2.15pm, 4.30pm, 6.45pm
Rush Hour 4pm, 6.50pm

TUESDAY RADIO

RADIO 1

(97.5-98.8MHz FM)
6.30 Chris Moyles. 9.00 Simon Mayo. 12.00 Kevin Greening. 2.00 Mark Radcliffe. 4.00 Dave Pearce. 6.00 Steve Lamacq - the Evening Session. 8.00 John Peel. 12.00 The Breezeblock. 2.00 Emma B. 4.00 - 6.30 Scott Mills.

RADIO 2

(88-90.2MHz FM)
6.00 Alex Lester. 7.30 Wake Up to Wogan. 9.30 Ken Bruce. 12.00 Jimmy Young. 2.00 Ed Stewart. 5.05 Johnnie Walker. 7.00 Evelyn Glennie's Classics. 8.00 Nigel Ogden. 9.00 Annual Delights. See *Pick of the Day*. 10.00 Richard Allinson. 12.00 Katrina Leskanich. 3.00 - 4.00 Mo Durt.

RADIO 3

(90.2-92.4MHz FM)
6.00 On Air. 10.30 Masterworks. 10.30 Artist of the Week. 11.00 Sound Stories. 12.00 Composer of the Week: Bizet. 1.00 The Radio 3 Lunchtime Concert. (R) 2.00 The BBC Orchestras. 4.00 Dival. 4.45 Music to Die For. 5.00 A Madieval Christmas. 5.30 Music Rooms. 6.00 Discovering Music with Leonard Slatkin. 7.00 Christmas Cocktails. 7.30 Performance on 3. Another chance to hear ten of the most memorable concerts of the 1998 BBC Proms season at the Royal Albert Hall, London. 2: Prom 40, given on 18 August. David Wilson-Johnson (haritone). BBC Singers. BBC Symphony Orchestra/Oliver Knussen and Stephen Cleobury. Messiah: L'Ascension. George Benjamin. Sometime Voices. Robin Holloway: Hymn to the Senses. Scriabin: The Poem of Ecstasy. (R) 9.00 Postscript. Comedian and broadcaster Rainier Hersch presents five personal and idiosyncratic studies of the music of our century. 2: 'The Best Alive or Dead'. Who were the great musicians of the century? 9.20 Celebrity Trio. Thomas Ze-

PICK OF THE DAY

FOR MANY, Christmas has become a crassly commercial, TV-dominated festival. But for some, it is still the time of year when we celebrate the arrival of the *Blue Peter* annual. In *Annual Delights* (9pm R2) Hugh Dennis surveys the history of the annual, from its Victorian origins to the first recognisably modern children's annuals.

More sophisticated pleasures with the return of Book, Music and Lyrics (10.45pm R3). Robert Cushman's intelligent look at the world of musicals. Today he sees what the older generation of musical writers have been up to lately, and compares their work to the latest blockbusters, including *Rent* tonight.

ROBERT HANKS



hetmar (violin). Tabca Zimmermann (viola). Heinrich Schill (cello). Schubert: String Trio in B flat, D91. Schoenberg: String Trio, Op 45. Mozart: Divertimento in E flat, K563. 10.45 Book, Music and Lyrics. Six programmes in which Robert Cushman presents a personal view of musicals, with songs from original cast recordings - some familiar, some less well known. 1: 'New Shows, Older Voices'. See *Pick of the Day*. 11.30 Jazz Notes. 12.00 Composer of the Week: Bach. (R) 1.00 - 6.00 Through the Night.

RADIO 4

(92.4-94.6MHz FM)
6.00 Today. 9.00 NEWS. The Choice. 9.45 Serial: Scaps with Iannucci. 10.00 NEWS. Woman's Hour. 11.00 NEWS. A Wall to the North: Fear. 11.30 Pollyanna. 12.00 NEWS. You and Yours. 12.57 Weather. 1.00 The World at One. 1.30 Full Orchestra. 2.00 NEWS. The Archers. 2.15 Afternoon Play: Henry's Leg. 3.00 NEWS. The Exchange: 0171 580 4444. 3.30 Beating the System. 3.45 Colonel Clay - Master of Disguise. 4.00 NEWS. A Good Read. 4.30 Shop Talk. 5.00 PM. 5.57 Weather.

6.00 Six O'Clock News. 6.30 4 at the Store. 7.00 NEWS. The Archers. 7.15 Front Row. Francine Stock chairs the arts programme, including the verdict on 'The Acid House', a new film based on the stories of Irvine Welsh. 7.45 Under One Roof. The first of three live-part dramatisations from the Michele Hanson stories. With Janet Maw, Edna Dore and Luisa Bradshaw-White (2/5). 8.00 NEWS. A Mission to Civilise. Ofeiba Quist-Arcton explores the secretive lies that bind France to her former colonies in Africa. 2: 'Senegal - the Cultural Revolution'. Senegal was once France's first colony in Africa. This programme examines the French cultural legacy in Africa and asks why more and more Senegalese seem to be turning their backs on Paris. 8.40 In Touch. Peter White with news for visually impaired people. 9.00 NEWS. Case Notes. 'Transplants and Transfusions'. Blood transfusions, donated organs, fetal cell grafts - Graham Easton looks at the future of spare-part medicine. 9.30 The Choice. Michael Buerk talks to individuals who have made life-changing choices, taking them through the whole process, from the initial dilemma to living with the consequences. 10.00 The World Tonight. With Robin Lustig. 10.45 Book at Bedtime: Chosen for Christmas. Five stars read their chosen seasonal tale. 2: Joss Ackland reads 'A Child's Christmas

in Wales' by Dylan Thomas. 11.00 The Now Show. Steve Punt and Hugh Dennis present a cavalcade of cutting-edge comedy with the regular team of Simon Munnery, Jane Bussmann, David Quantick, Nick Romero and Dan Freedman. 11.30 Talking Pictures. 12.00 News. 12.30 The Late Book: Out of Her Senses. 12.48 Shipping Forecast. 1.00 As World Service. 5.30 World News. 5.35 Shipping Forecast. 5.40 Inshore Forecast. 5.45 Prayer for the Day. 5.47 - 6.00 Farming Today.

RADIO 4 LW

(198kHz)
9.45 - 10.00 Daily Service. 12.00 - 12.04 News. Shipping Forecast. 5.54 - 5.57 Shipping Forecast. 11.30 - 12.0 Parliament.

RADIO 5 LIVE

(693, 809kHz MW)
6.00 Breakfast. 9.00 Brian Hayes. 1.00 The World News. 1.00 Ruscoe and Co. 1.00 Drive. 7.00 News Extra. 7.30 The Life and Death of Belfast Celtic. Fifty years ago, Belfast Celtic were the finest football team in Ireland. But on 22 December 1948 their reign came to a dramatic and final end. George Best presents the first of two programmes looking at the life and death of Belfast Celtic.

8.00 Play it Again. The programme in which listeners get to choose their favourite sporting moments from the BBC archives. 9.00 When Winter Comes. What do county cricketers do in the winter when they have hung up their pads? Simon Mann investigates, with the help of the likes of Nell Fairbrother, Jack Russell and Ian Austin. 10.00 Leis Night Live. The day's big stories with Steve LeFevre. In- cl 10.30 Sports round-up. 11.00 News and finance. 11.30-1.00 Topical discussion. 1.00 Up All Night. 5.00 - 6.00 Morning Reports.

CLASSIC FM

(100.0-101.9MHz FM)
6.00 Nick Bailey. 8.00 Henry Kelly. 12.00 Requests. 2.00 Concerto: Pattersen: Little Red Riding Hood. Featuring Julie Waters, Danny DeVito and Ian Holm. London O/Franz Weiser-Mos. 3.00 Jamie Crook. 6.30 Newsnight. 7.00 Smooth Classics at Seven. 9.00 Evening Concert: Nicholas Treilian introduces the Classic FM Christmas Concert, recorded live at Westminster Abbey. Featuring Aline Brewer (harp), Philip Scriven (organ), Choir of Westminster Abbey, director Martin Baker. The programme includes a performance of Britten's Carols of the 1930s. 11.00 Alan Mann. 2.00 Concerto. 3.0-6.0 Mark Griffiths.

VIRGIN RADIO

(125, 187-126kHz MW 105.8MHz FM)
6.00 Jeremy Clark. 9.30 Russ Williams. 1.00 Nick Abbot. 4.00 Harriet Scott. 7.30 Janey Lee Grace. 10.00 James Merritt. 1.00 - 6.00 Richard Allen.

WORLD SERVICE RADIO

(158kHz LW)
1.00 Newsdesk. 1.30 Discovery. 2.00 Newsday. 2.30 Meridian (Live). 3.00 World News. 3.05 World Business Report. 3.15 Sports Roundup. 3.30 One Planet. 4.00 - 7.00 The World Today.

TALK RADIO

6.00 Bill Overton and Sally Meen. 9.00 Scott Chisholm. 12.00 Lorraine Kelly. 2.00 Anna Raeburn. 4.00 Peter Deeley. 5.00 The Sports Zone. 8.00 Mike Allan. 1.00 - 6.00 Ian Collins.

INDEPENDENT PURSUITS

CHESS

JON SPEELMAN

DURING 1988-9 the Grandmasters' Association held a series of six World Cup tournaments in what later unfortunately turned out to be the only completed cycle of their Grand Prix. The second of these very fine events took place in the French city of Belfort, just a couple of dozen miles from Basle on the Swiss border.

The chief organiser, Jean-Paul Touzé, is a far from insubstantial gentleman who, I am told, at one stage swam for France. The power behind a world junior championship which was held in Belfort in the early Eighties, M Touzé has consistently produced a strong Belfort team for the ferociously competitive - and sometimes downright litigious - French league. And after something of a hiatus, he again started holding high-quality tournaments a few years ago.

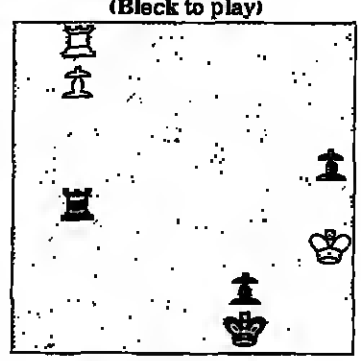
This year's event, which started on 14 December and finishes tomorrow, is a six-player double- rounder averaging 2,572. After six of the ten rounds the lead was held by Mikhail Gurevich (Belgium) on 5/6 ahead of Ruslan Ponomarev (Ukraine) 4.5 well clear of Arnaud Hauchard (France) 3, Victor Bologan (Moldavia) 2.5, Eduardas Rozentalis (Lithuania) 2 and Jean-Marc Degraeve (France) on just 1.

Of these the most topical for us is 15-year-old Ruslan Ponomarev

who is going on to Hastings, starting a week today. Already a tough player, he surely won't be favourite - that position must belong to Matthew Sadler or perhaps Ivan Sokolov: but Ponomarev is mighty dangerous, more it is true in the style of an anaconda than a cobra.

This was the instructive finish to a long grind. If 79 Rg8+ Kh4 80 Rb6+ 81 Kg7 Rxb7+ wins.

Ruslan Ponomarev (Black to play)



Arnaud Hauchard (White)

69... Kg1 70 Rg8+ Kh1 71 Rb8 Rb3+ 72 Kh4 Kf2 73 Rg8+ Kh2 74 Rb8 Rb4+ 75 Kxb5 Kg3 76 Rg8+ Kh3 77 Rb8 Rb5+ 78 Kh6 Kg3 79 b8Q+ Rxb8 80 Rxb8 Qf4 and White resigned on move 91.

jspeelman@compuserve.com

CREATIVITY

LOKI

MARTINE MCCUTCHEON was quitting, so Tiffany needed writing out. With unerring predictability, *East-Enders'* scriptwriter Carol Noble had Grunt get violent. Surely Creativity readers would have been more imaginative?

Michael Gifford has her to a nude protest in Albert Square to close the Vic, while Len Clarke achieves maximum impact on the ratings by piping her aboard a frigate with all hands on deck to watch her strip. JW Gore has Grunt commit suicide out of remorse. Pat Gould whisks Tiff to Lourdes at death's door; she recovers miraculously, and, renouncing worldly pleasure, becomes a Carmelite nun.

Tiff likes to be taken out so Martin Brown has a cruise missile, aimed with pinpoint accuracy at Saddam Hussein, crash through Tiff's bedroom window and do just that. Or, at a seance Tiff gets through to Dirty Den's ectoplasmic ghost, who seduces her; she tops herself to join him in the hereafter, and they float ethereally off into the sunset of their careers. Paul Turner predicts a ratings war with a horde of raving Mancunian actors, brandishing Cadbury's Creme Eggs, hurrying into the Vic and murdering the entire cast.

Joe Adams (Ms) has Tiff become Biff - she has a sex change and becomes a man (with groundbreaking scenes of breast reduction and penile reconstruction). She always was a man, Dusty Hoffman insists, and finally comes out as one and incestuously elopes to Gretna.

Green with Simon. Gerry Mac an Cheapaigh knows otherwise, unmasking her as an evil Middle Eastern Mata Hari bent on discovering Britain's stock of weapons of mass destruction, by sexually gratifying our gullible top brass.

Andrew Duncan has her half-eaten by a shark; or, impregnated by Bepe, explode at the birth of sextuplets; or, Grunt, his puerility affronted by finding her in a lesbian clinch with Dot Cotton, kills her and embalsms her in a cask of best brandy. Peggy hands out lots of free brandy to all her customers. And he borrows from Tony Hancock by scripting an earthquake, causing a hole in the road into which the whole cast falls and perishes, whereupon the BBC announces the return of *El Dorado* in the spring schedules, starting Martine McCutcheon.

Noble Prizes for Literature to Martin Brown and Joe Adams, who win themselves copies of *Chambers Dictionary of Quotations*. Andrew gets an hon mention and wins his *Chambers* for suggesting our next theme: new year resolutions - for other people to keep.

Suggestions to Creativity: *The Independent*, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL. Three copies of *Chambers Dictionary of Quotations* for the best ideas. Results on 5 January. Next week, Creativity channel-hops from the predictable *Queen's Christmas Message* to alternative Christmas messages and speakers whom readers have specially commissioned.

CONCISE CROSSWORD

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ACROSS
5 Person interested in morbid events (5)
8 Smokers' requisites (8)
9 Vesicle (5)
10 Uphold (8)
11 Assume authority unlawfully (5)
14 Induced (3)
16 Foolish (6)
17 Flattened at the poles (6)
18 Devour (3)
20 Convulsion (5)
24 Arrange in columns etc (8)
25 Cautious (5)
26 Crystal (3,5)
27 Coral reef (5)

DOWN
1 S American animal (5)
2 Once more (5)
3 Declare (5)
4 Come to destination (6)
6 Heavy pressure to buy (4,4)
7 Develop into open sores (8)
12 Picture (8)
13 Troubadour (8)
14 Shelter (3)
15 Point (3)
19 Counting-frame (6)
21 Confection (5)
22 Of the nose (5)
23 Poetry (5)

Solution to yesterday's Concise Crossword:
ACROSS: 1 Candel, 2 Hates (Candidates), 3 Badge, 4 Hatters, 10 Leanside, 12 Cue, 13 Scarab, 14 Rapist, 17 Rod, 18 Leucocyte, 20 Ignoble, 21 Onix, 22 Medal, 24 Bayonet. DOWN: 1 Cabal, 2 Nod, 3 Inertia, 4 Daffia, 5 Hove, 6 Throcyne, 7 Suspect, 11 Abandon, 13 Sophism, 15 Ecology, 16 Superb, 18 Libel, 19 Eject, 22 Ann.

SATELLITE AND CABLE

PICK OF THE DAY

PUBLICITY BUMPF used to dub Ingrid Bergman (right) 'Sweden's greatest export since Garbo', and for once the hype contained a grain of truth. Her luminous screen presence lit up many Hollywood movies from the time she came to America in the late 1930s. In perhaps her most famous role, she played opposite Humphrey Bogart in *Casablanca*. He credited her with bringing out in him a previously undetected capacity

for screen romance. 'I didn't do anything I've never done before,' he said, 'but when the camera moves in on her face, and she's saying she loves you, it would make anybody look romantic.' She is profiled in Hollywood Hall of Fame (9.30pm Sky Cinema), which is followed by *Notorious* (10pm), the classic Alfred Hitchcock wartime thriller in which she stars with Cary Grant.

JAMES RAMPTON



World (4287342), 8.30 Street Sharks (8395), 9.00 The Simpsons (8029), 9.30 Earthworm Jim (25822), 10.00 Hercules - the Legendary Journeys (86008), 10.00 The New Adventures of Superman (83482), 12.00 The Oprah Winfrey Show (8573629), 12.55 The Special K Collection (3687464), 1.00 Days of Our Lives (8654838), 1.55 The Special K Collection (7799551), 2.00 Sally Jessy Raphael (843445), 2.55 The Special K Collection (238700), 3.00 Jerry Jones (734022), 3.55 The Special K Collection (810548), 4.00 Best of Gaiety (3659), 5.00 Star Trek: Deep Space Nine (5648), 6.00 Married with Children (5639), 6.30 Dream Team (4261), 7.00 The Simpsons (8377), 7.30 The Simpsons (5788), 8.00 Legends (8223), 8.30 Speed (4532), 9.00 Forces of Nature 2 (78538), 9.00 World's Deadliest Volcanoes (7025), 11.00 Dream Team (8028), 11.30 Star Trek (5090), 12.30 Highlander (5638), 1.30 - 8.00 Long Play (776365).

SKY SPORTS 1

7.00 Sky Sports Centre (816667), 7.25 V-Max (87759), 7.45 H2O (86822), 8.35 Sports Centre (83058), 8.30 Racing News (1006), 9.00 Aerobics (22358), 9.30 Football League (8478), 10.30 Max Power (88803), 11.30 V-Max (83532), 12.30 Monday Night Football Championship as Aston Villa (7008), 2.30 Spanish Football (8057), 3.30 Fastest (8358), 5.00 Wrestling (8880), 6.00 Sports Centre (3551), 9.30 Inside Scottish Football

(89903), 7.30 Fastest (7777), 8.00 Spanish Football (82532), 10.00 Sky Sports Centre (87335), 10.35 Football Show (85028), 11.45 Scottish Football (78639), 12.45 Sky Sports Centre (872859), 12.30 Spanish Football (50025), 2.30-2.45 Sports Centre (890507).

SKY SPORTS 2

7.00 Aerobics - Oz Style (330174), 7.30 Sky Sports Centre (860454), 7.45 Racing News (887822), 8.35 Winding Road (805237), 8.45 Sports Centre (835754), 9.00 Fish TV (23500), 9.30 Fish TV (333532), 10.00 Winding Road (458890), 10.30 Spanish Football (87584), 12.30 Watersports (41807), 1.30 Max Power (48788), 2.30 Moto-plus (872209), 3.00 World Motor Sport (852959), 6.00 Sports Unlimited (335867), 7.00 Beach Volleyball (825033), 7.30 Ice Hockey (796074), 8.00 Sports Unlimited (875754), 11.00 Showjumping (330822), 12.00 Dancing (725087), 1.00 Ice Hockey (55438), 3.30-3.45 Sports Centre (847955).

SKY SPORTS 3

12.00 World Wrestling (884857), 1.00 Fish TV (848670), 1.30 Fish TV (848670), 2.30 World Wrestling (884857), 3.30 Squeash (874351), 3.30 Squeash (874351), 4.30 Canoeing (8782087), 5.00 World Wrestling (884857), 5.30 Showjumping - Spruce Meadows Championship Season Review (815651), 6.30 Fastest (837832), 7.00 Fish TV The Ultimate Fishing Show (875949), 7.30 Fish

TV Fishing Tales (878378), 8.00 Showjumping (852728), 8.00 Dancing (852902), 10.00 Superbouts All vs. Girls (857984), 11.00-11.30 Olympic Series Olympic Distances (738902).

EUROSPORT

7.30 Xtrem Sports (87358), 8.30 Xtrem Sports (8324), 9.30 Olympic Games (4678), 11.00 Football (7338), 12.30 Car on Ice (5803), 1.00 Highland Games (8358), 2.00 Football (8387), 4.00 Football (4228), 5.30 The (5342), 7.00 Darts (2359), 8.00 Boxing (5808), 10.00 Football (8607), 12.00-1.00 Football (2223).

UK GOLD

7.00 Crossroads (836957), 7.30 Neighbours (4328), 7.55 EastEnders (40058), 8.30 The Bill (845622), 9.00 The Bill (87038), 9.30 Middlemarch (81832), 10.30 Angels (808622), 11.00 Dallas (847532), 11.55 Neighbours (322243), 12.25 EastEnders (225632), 1.00 Middlemarch (728087), 2.00 Dallas (84507), 2.55 The Bill (845622), 3.25 The Bill (845622), 3.55 EastEnders (874498), 4.30 Angels (808622), 4.55 Film: Carry On Christmas: Carry On Dick (1974) (2055649), 6.45 Bread (8485008), 7.55 Waiting for God (888822), 9.00 One Foot in the Grave (859980), 9.40 Men Behaving Badly (884858), 10.20 Bottom (854008), 11.00 The Bill (845622), 11.30 The Bill (87038), 12.00 Bread (190865), 1.00 Some Mothers Do 'A' (452023), 1.50 Keeping Up Appearances (708088).

2.55 - 7.00 Shopping (877649)

LIVING

6.00 Tiny Living (845855), 8.00 The Roseanne Show (828377), 9.50 The Jerry Springer Show (806280), 10.40 Michael Clark (824638), 11.30 Brookside (814980), 12.00 Special Babies (822077), 12.30 Rescue 911 (777532), 1.00 Ready, Steady, Cook (824532), 1.35 Cant Cook, Won't Cook (762445), 2.00 The Jerry Springer Show (828377), 3.00 News at Five: Live from Brooklyn (845) (8270008), 5.30 News at Ten (8270008), 6.30 The Jerry Springer Show (828377), 7.00 Rescue 911 (777532), 7.30 Beyond Belief (803374), 8.00 Aly McNeal (8770984), 8.00 Film: Shooting Elizabeth (827) (877077), 11.00 Spy Sex Files (447984), 12.00 Close.

TNT

8.00 The Shop around the Corner (1940) (852788), 11.00 Football Final (1950) (833329), 12.45 The Hit (1965) (4484965), 3.00 The Shop around the Corner (1940) (447984), 5.00 Close.

PARAMOUNT COMEDY CHANNEL

10.00 Cussies (728), 12.30 Diamonds (8629), 2.00 Roseanne (8208), 3.30 Just Shoot Me (2716), 5.00 Cybil (80208), 9.30 Seinfeld (7638), 10.00 Frasier (8478), 10.30 Cheers (8783), 11.00 Festival of Fun! (8574), 11.30 The Larry Sanders Show (8284), 12.00 Late Night with David Letterman (8244), 1.00 Ted (50148), 1.30 The Office (8887), 2.00 Dr Katz (4448), 2.30 Soap (2365), 3.00 Hooperman (80385), 3.30-4.00 Nightstand (7238).

GRANADA PLUS

6.00 The Box (842955), 7.00 On the Bus (889025), 7.30 Fern Street Gang (888532), 8.00 Thanks My Boy (854087), 8.30 Second Thoughts (854035), 9.00 Coronation Street (859498), 9.30 Emmerdale (843058), 10.00 Thirtysomething (863478), 11.00 Hawaii Five-O (854728), 12.00 Classic Coronation Street (854474), 12.30 Emmerdale (844687), 1.00 How's Your Father? (885388), 1.30 Watling (844038), 2.00 Thirtysomething (854525), 3.00 The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes (895251), 4.00 The Professionals (4978358), 5.00 Hawaii Five-O (72822), 6.00 Emmerdale (857857), 6.30 Classic Coronation Street (844819), 7.00 Mission: Impossible (2574483), 8.00 The Professionals (255333), 9.00 Classic Coronation Street (844819), 9.30 Sea Lee (84283), 10.00 The Joker's Wild (854580), 10.30 Hogan's Heroes (854581), 11.00-12.00 As Granada Men & Motors (763377).

REGIONAL TELEVISION VARIATIONS

BBC1 N IRELAND

As BBC1 London except: 6.30 Newsline 6.30 (875), 9.30 The Christmas Showdown (85532), 10.30 Film: Speed (8158407), 12.30 Celine Dion: These Are Special Times (888848), 1.00 Film: Staying Alive (888848), 2.30 Joins BBC News 24 (1050052).

BBC1 SCOTLAND

As BBC1 London except: 6.00 News (448), 6.30 Reporting Scotland; Weather (875).

BBC1 WALES

As BBC1 London except: 6.30 Wales Today (875), 9.30 News at 7 (85532), 10.30 Film: Speed (8158407), 12.30 Celine Dion: These Are Special Times (888848), 1.00 Film: Staying Alive (888848), 2.30 Joins BBC News 24 (1050052).

ANGLO

As Carlton except: 12.20 Anglia News and Weather (870735), 1.00 Di-nosaurs (48822), 2.35 Anglia News and Weather (870735), 3.00 Bead

TELEVISION REVIEW



TV CRITICS: The swing. Don't try realising what they're doing? Don't let us know how much they can turn people's feelings! Last night's Clive James on television (CTV) took on the subject of science fiction. As the show opened, Clive James was sitting there as usual on his squaky TV sofa, as severe and pot-bellied as a Japanese Buddha.

Welcome to the television programme about television programmes! He drewled, the Zen-like paradox somewhat adding to the effect of his appearance. And for the next 36 minutes, he did the most terrible, unbearable thing, he dismissed *Blicker's Seven*, even worse, he mocked *Doctor Who*.

Now, I have a soft spot for TV series which are mainly constructed out of Boccioni. I don't sit inside my wardrobe making "woon-woon," noises, and I don't say things like, "Theopomp. Calph!" into my underwear. Not often, anyway. But watching Clive James poke fun at some of the most intense experiences of my childhood was more than I could bear. Who was he to snifle about the gruesome village of Scaevoti or the legendry? Or to suggest that there was something inherently absurd about *The Death of Morichius*? Who were the studio audiences to giggle at the Mandarins from the planet Deent Diddit? They realise that they were making tasteless jokes at the expense of people's deeply held beliefs? I know the blasphemy laws don't cover such matters, but I was quite ready to go down to the Head Office of Carlton Communications and stage a protest by publicly burning a copy of *Kay Meek* into *Jane*.

Last week, Carlton was fired from for fabricating material in a documentary about a heroin-smuggling ring. They ought to be fined another million at least for the reviews that take place between Clive James and his guests, when they scandalously attempt to pass off as natural conversation.

Last night's principal interview was with the comedien Greg Proops, whose connections with the world of TV set-d-are rather tenuous (he once presented a quiz show about the subject on Channel 4). He seemed to have been mainly to entertain the show mainly to raille through a series of well-rehearsed and well-worn observations about *Sherlock*. You know, the one about William Shakespeare attending bullfight. The one about the polypore rocks that appeared every in episode. Those old Victorian charlats, which I suspect are quite harmless even to people who have never seen the show. At least nobody went on about how it was always the guys in the red shirts who were the first to get killed each week. To balance Proops' cynicism, James also lied three cheerful *Doctor Who* commentators sitting in the studio audience. Annette Willis (who once got infected with serum that turned her into a fish); Nicola Bryant (who once underwent a forcible brain-swap with a giant slug; and Sophie Aldred (who once got trapped in a lift with a hungry praying mantis wearing Victorian evening dress).

They all looked remarkably well, considering the experiences they'd been through at the hands, claws and sick plungers of Dibaks, Govenmen and power-crazed dictators. And they were also eager to show that they could still scream at a pitch that could hurt the eardrums of a Sorathan.

However, even though they seemed willing to participate in the doling-down of the rubberized alibis which they'd spent the most high-profile part of their careers running through quarters to escape.

Not that Tim living in a world of self-delusion, you understand. Okay, so the Giant Soldiers of Metalbeals III did look a bit like something you'd get from the shop to scare your little sister. And it now seems quite clear that the famous single eye of the Moomin creature was in fact a phony-pung tail with a job pinned on it. In my dearest moments, I'd even admit to myself that Once in Dibeks Seven was just a parody, satirical with a few fairly light innuendo. But you shouldn't even say that sort of thing. Not out loud. It spoils everything.

Ferhaps the most traumatic moment came when Greg Proops suggested that people who liked *Doctor Who* and *Dibeks's Seven* were sad individuals who spent too much time on the internet, and didn't have any friends. And if you were as upset by that as me, I suggested we have a serious online chat about it. I'm free most nights.

Channel

9.00 Business Breakfast (9:00-9:30) **2.00 News** (7)
(60867), **9.30 Sweet Valley High** (3) (7) (78147-9), **9.35**
The Fonz (78170-3), **9.55** *Barbapapa* (80710-3),
10.20 News, *Regional News*, *Weather* (7) (83058-9),
10.30 **FBI: The Notorious Prince** (Paul Schell 1980
Cam), animated version of the Christmas story, set to
music by Thelma Houston and featuring the voices of Peter
Onofre and Kiefer Sutherland (5) (7) (85354-6).

11.40 The New Adventures of Supermen (3) (5) (7)
(73239-0), **12.25** *Wipeout* (5) (7) (89241-3), **12.50** *The*
Weather Show (73237-5), **1.00** *News*, *Weather* (7)
(83754), **1.30** *Regional News and Weather* (41782-5),
1.40 *Neighbours* (5) (7) (87753-9), **2.05** *Batman*
Dog Home (80635-5), **2.30** *Due South* (5) (28585-32)

8.35 Neighbours, Amy's dog-walking business gets off to
bad start, you'd be entrained to hear (5) (7) (8256-9).

8.00 News, *Weather* (7) (416).

8.30 Regional News, *And Weather* (7) (875).

7.30 Holiday: Fasten Your Seat Belt Christmas
Special, Recipes for out travel tips - Craig Doyle
working as a tour rep in Finnish Lapland and Alice Bean
joining the cast of Disney World, Florida (5) (7) (8735).

7.30 Eastenders, Ali is revealed as Tilly's memory
returns (5) (7) (209).

8.00 Airport Christmas Special, 'Tis the season to be
merry at Heathrow Airport, as the doc as they might be to
imagine, the regulars of this doc-soap swap jobs for a
day (5) (7) (843).

8.30 Mysteries with Carol Vorderman, Could a
woman really choose for diamond? Plus the dogs that
saved their owners' lives (5) (7) (499).

8.00 News, *Regional News*, *Weather* (7) (8984).

8.30 News Speed (Jan De Bont 1994 US), *Keaton*
Reacts to the record-breaking rainy day. See *Farm of the*
Day, *beator* (5) (7) (267-9).

11.20 Celine Dion: These Are Special Times, *Seas-*
onal favourites from the Canadian chanteuse (89025).

12.00 FBI: Mystery Alibi (Syvester Stallone 1983 US),
Produce-with-*cheat* *Syvester Stallone* acts, over-
bearing belief to John Badham's *Statute of Rape* *Fever*
a wild tale of light love rather than a dance one,
John Travolta is pumped up and *day* as he repeats his
boy *Harvey* act (7) (7835).

1.30 FBI: Bitten Candice (John Hughes 1984 US),
Molly Ringwald comes of age (7) (8310), To 3am.

TWO RAT LADIES (8:30pm 89-2, 4974) The ladies are in
Jamaica where they are to cook a Christmas lunch of pumpkin
soup, jack-pot and spice mulling for the local poor club is
shadily attended with, we never really get a clue on this lot.
Maybe it's the heat, but Jamaica and Christmas have a while to
get into their stride, but before long they're mixing rum punch
in Jamaica's pioneering "residues" like Charles Langham in
Mystery on the Beach, and both are stripping down to their
bikinis for a dip in the Caribbean. A righthearted stuff, but also
entertaining. You wouldn't want to share a kitchen with these
two rat ladies.

COOKERY SHOW OF THE DAY

7200 **Goldfinger's Big G**, The Little Power Star (R) (S) (6038261), 7.05 Telepictures (S) (6038963), 7.20 (V) Treasures Hunt (R) (6794240), 7.50 Blue Peter (S) (7) (9850506), 8.15 *Big, the Cat* (S) (3019513), 8.30 *Tea*, *Maria* (67919), 9.00 *Animal World*, *Warriors* (S) (394209), 12.00 *The Tales of Canterbury* (S) (61725), 12.30 *The Simpsons* (R) (S) (4930367), 1.15 *Pea the Punt* (S) (7) (7871977), 1.45 *Pea the Punt* (S) (7) (7860231), 1.58 *Timewatch* (R), 7.50 *News* (S) (7) (7850532), 2.25 *The West* (S) (S) (999008), 3.40 *News*, *Regional News*, *Weather* (7) (9972356).

3.45 **ELIM** *El Dorado* (Howard Hawks 1967 US), Forming a loose trilogy with *Rio Bravo* and *Hombre*, this is Howard Hawks' masterling, slightly erudite western in which John Wayne and Robert Mitchum get to send it themselves up and crack jokes about old age (Wayne's old age, specifically). The big "u" and buddy James Caan must persuade drunken sheriff Mellick to sort himself out and see off the bad guys led by Ed Asner's rapacious cattle baron. Good fun in a sleek, self-indulgent sort of a way (7) (93627415).

B.00 **The Simpsons** (S) (7) (94025).

B.25 **Rex the Runt**, Deepdipping Ploestina animation from the creators of Wallace and Gromit (the script is disappointing, not the manœuvre animation). The gang crash-land their helicopter on an island (S) (7) (73225).

B.53 **Star Trek: Deep Space Nine**, *Star Trek* fans, lake and Nog try an intergalactic incident through an innocent attempt to fit Sisko's spirits (S) (7) (27325).

7.20 **Pea the Punt**, Paul Martin and Anthea de Courtee "lead" their voices for the episode (S) (7) (214803).

7.30 **The Canterbury Tales**, The Merchant, the Pardoner and the Franklin recount their tales. With the voices of Bob Peck, Robert Lindsay and Bill Nighy (S) (7) (55).

8.00 **Feed and Drink**, The best justice where for under 132, And guest Chris Gray and Max create easy finger food for the party session (S) (7) (3025).

8.30 **CHARGE**, *Two Fat Ladies*, The ladies fill Jamaica. See *Cookery Show of the Day*, below (S) (7) (552).

9.00 **Butterflies**, The Christmas episode from 1979 for Carla, Lane's albino, Pia (Wendy Craig) is torn between her family and her sibling, Leonard (S) (7) (2754).

9.30 **GRUDGE** *Agnes and their Owners*, Some of the more eccentric of the 550,000 Agnes Owners in this country. See *Documentary of the Day*, below (S) (7) (97205).

10.20 **A Woman Called Smith** (R) (S) (7) (17714).

10.30 **Nightnight**, With Gordon Brewer (7) (56251).

11.15 **Brothers and Sisters**, Last in the series for this undervalued neglected drama series about a gospel church community (S) (943359).

11.45 **ELIM** *Hidden Fortress* (Akira Kurosawa 1956 Jap) Continuing the season of Akira Kurosawa films, this is one that George Lucas claimed inspired him when he wrote *Star Wars*. Without Chieko and Kametaki Fujiwara are the two hapless soldiers of a defeated enemy prisoner into transporting gold and a device engineered to the safety of a neighbouring province. Funny and exciting (Then *West/View*) (3581577), 10.25am.

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5.00 GMTV (0930-930), **5.25 ITN News Headlines** (4339974),
8.35 Children's TV, *Toy Toy Adventures* (R) (0914867),
10.00 Rock and the Juice (R) (5) (5303839), **10.05**
Art Attack, *Christmas Cracker* (R) (5) (7) (5954839).
10.45 **Channel The Newsreading Story: It's The Next**
Chapter (George Miller, 1991 Gen/US). A young boy
enters a storybook world on a quest to save a magical
kingdom from the poisoning of an evil queen. You know
the kind of thing (5) (7) (5910233).
12.20 **Your Show** (0707035), **12.30 News: Weather** (7)
(5494), **1.00 London Today** (7) (48822), **1.30 Cross**
Wits (5) (7) (60735), **2.00 Wheel of Fortune** (5) (7)
(7087), **2.30 ITN News Headlines** (7) (5910232), **2.35**
London Today (7) (5903038), **2.40 Stamp** (R) (5) (7)
(7380389), **4.40 Survival Special** (5) (7) (5237615).

5.40 **Newsw Weather** (7) (4399964).
6.00 London Tonight, Regional news update for the
capital and the South-East (7) (6783).
8.30 Good Stuff, Rowland Rivron and Wendy Douglas
present their guide to whats on in and around London
(5) (7) (593).
7.00 **Emergency**, Melton and Butch come to blows over
Mandy, would you credit it, and Andy has split some
dangerous information to his father (5) (7) (1605).
7.30 Princess for a Day, A young girl and the appeal she
has launched for the Osteopathic Centre for Children in
Harley Street (7) (677).
8.00 The Bill, Culmen and Bouton are faced with a
drugged dog and an unreliable hippie, while
Holt defends the reputation of Sun Hill in a pub
quiz (7) (2629).
8.00 Catherine Cookson's Colour Blind, 2/2.
Concluding slab of this Cookson yarn about a mixed-
race marriage and its consequences in the Tyne-side of
the 1920s. After being run over, Rose Angela and her
father make up for lost years, while she and Stanhope
acknt their feeling for each other (5) (7) (1615).
10.00 ITN Newsw Weather (7) (255919).
10.05 London Tonight (7) (704087).
10.25 The Thing You Do for Love, The first of three
dramatised tales of real-life romances. The one involves
Ski-lee singer Ronnie Hilton and a secret affair he
apparently conducted (7) (2723900).
11.30 In Search of Tarzan with Jonathan Ross (5)
(7) (595077).
12.35 **ITN Tarzan the Magnificent** (Robert Day, 1980
US). Former biggame Gordon Scott in the last of the five
better-than-average Tarzan tales (7) (380323).
2.40 The Haunted Flatmate (0850303).
2.35 **ITN Ernest Savane Chetelmans** (John Cherry
1988 US). But no-one can save the comedy - one of at
least sixes overed round a character made popular in US
TV commercials, Jim Varney stars (75755). To 40sem.

MENTARY OF THE DAY

7.00 Fox Better for Worse (6/839). **7.30 The Magic School Bus** (6/5307). **8.00 The Big Breakfast** (6/7529). **8.30 Planet Pop** (6/4326). **10.30 Star Trek: Indiana** (6/655-220). **10.35 The Secret World of Alex Mack** (6/24162).

11.40 Moebe's (S) (T) (6097). **12.00 Madcatz** (6/6803).

12.30 Film The Thief of Baghdad (Lucyng Bengt, Michael Powell, Tim Whelan, Zoltan Korda, William Cameron Menzies and Alexander Kratoch 1940 US). A breathtaking and splendidly ambitious attempt to capture *The Arabian Nights* on film; the result surprisingly seamless (given the six directors who worked on it) early Technicolor fantasy. Setu is the street urchin who befriends a deposed prince and helps him win back the throne from evil grand vizier Conrad Veidt (excellent), and two neighbouring princesses Lure Dupree, Rex Ingram is the big-vibed giant with the Deep South accent. Great stuff (T) (40342).

2.30 Frances Pileggi's Westcountry Christmas (R) (S) (T) (654). **3.00 When Harry Met Sally** (R) (6464). **3.30 Tom Snyder** (T) (629). **4.00 Friends to Help Highfives** (L) (629). **4.30 Comedy Central** (S) (658532). **4.45 Late Show** (6/24087). **5.30 FBI: Rescued America** (S) (T) (6342).

B.00 Ted Viles TV. One-of-one comedy special about a hideous mess (mostly played by Canadian comic Sean Gailen, who decides to invite guests and celebrity guests into his home (T) (67029).

7.00 Channel 4 News Weather. (S) (T) (34483).

Channel 4 News Weather. (S) (T) (34483).

7.45 Film The Enemy Below (Dick Powell 1957 US). Dick Powell was forever supplying the fare, having made a name for himself as a noble in countless backstage musicals; he then turned in one of the best sort of all Philip Marlowe films in Edward Dmytryk's 1945 Chandler adaptation, *Murder My Sweet*. In the 60s he turned to television after directing the anonymous movie - the idea of which was his cat-and-mouse sea war fare competition. CMC Durpinis is the German submarine commander looked into a deadly battle of wits with Robert Taylor (uninspired American destroyer captain (T) (61223829)).

8.00 Last Orders. Channel 4's series of documentaries about the impact of alcohol continues with links to-day soldiers at Conventry's Magdalen Hospital. From a three-year-old girl whose growth has been damaged by her mother's drinking during pregnancy to a 60-year-old man dying from liver disease, the programme reveals the true cost of Britain's favourite drug (T) (6735).

10.00 Friends. Feelie edition of the American sitcom. Rose runs Monica's Christmas party by tampering with her heating (R) (S) (T) (67352).

10.30 Eurotrash Jingle Balls, Jingle Balls. An ice-dance extravaganza featuring some of the most successful dancers who took the disco parades (T) (446263).

11.05 This State Works like a Ben. Looks at alcohol abuse in the comedy business, with Bob Odenkirk, Jo Brand and other alcoholic Owen O'Neill (T) (53976).

12.05 All Back to Home with Paul Walker (T) (6582557).

12.40 Righteous Babes (6/48275).

1.40 Film The Desperate Housewife (William Wyler 1965 US). Humphrey Bogart's parallelisms performance is a cracker, as one of a trio of escaped convicts who hook up in the household of Fred March and family (4/472).

3.40 Dispatches (R) (6931410). To 405mm.

6.00 **5 News and Sport** (S) (685464), **7.00** **Winzies** House (R) (697655), **7.30** **Minsahiel** (S) (525555), **7.45** **Hazelkazo** (R) (S) (627754), **8.00** **George of the Jungle** (R) (7538006), **8.30** **When a Man Loves a Woman** (R) (7537377), **8.50** **Lougenheeds** (R) (7528629), **9.30** **USA High** (R) (S) (755087), **10.00** **The Gods of Olympus** (6003464), **(10.20)** **Sunrise Beach** (S) (7204793), **11.00** **Lazza** (R) (S) (674349), **11.55** **Bassell Grant's Politics** (6986518), **12.00** **5 News at Noon** (S) (773183), **12.30** **Family Affaire** (S) (7512820), **1.00** **The Bold and the Beautiful** (S) (R) (6958822), **1.30** **Sons and Daughters** (S) (750774), **2.00** **100 Per Cent Gold** (S) (432754), **2.30** **Good Afternoon** (S) (7508329).

5.25-5.50 **The Roseanne Show** (6038646).

5.30-6.00 **100 Per Cent**. One hundred questions, three contestants, no host and who knows how many viewers! (S) (2307830).

6.00-6.30 **Family Affaire**. The police turn up looking for Liam (S) (7735944).

6.30-7.00 **Wild at Home**. Wackie documentary about the fossil film *Wackie Centre Dales*, which is home to more than 1000 wild animals (S) (72554682).

7.00-7.30 **You Being Cheateer?** Charitie Hudson exercises one more fraudulent behaviour for our entertainment (S) (7412950).

7.30-8.00 **What Went Wrong?** An Indonesian plane blazes and a derelict ship in Alabama which plunges into alligator-infested swamp waters. Yippee (S) (431025).

8.00-8.30 **Lonesome Dove**, 4/4. Concluding the handsome, older western series, with Robert Iler, Tommy Lee Jones, Danny Glover and Angeline Hackett. The group continue to our hatted country and is soon surrounded by Indians (T) (6985656).

8.30-9.00 **Pull Meant Party**. Documentary in which cameras follow a group of travellers as they backpack their way around Thailand (inspired by Alex Garland's best-selling book *This Beach*) (S) (6670795).

9.00-9.30 **Leeza** (068369), **12.30** **Live and Dangerous** (S) (707496), **1.00** **Live and Dangerous** (continued) (S) (707496), **1.30** **Asian Football Show** (651832), **4.40** **Fischer**, Carl Book H (S55597), **5.30** **100 Per Cent** (R) (S) (708704), to Barn.

TELEVISION GUIDE BY GERRARD GILBERT

